PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 419 (Part 2)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FIFTY-THIRD YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 2003–04

COMPRISING PERIOD
15 March—1 April 2004

£105
(Two parts not sold separately)

HILDARIES

Cam Ref
(10164)

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15 March 2004

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 15 March 2004

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears): The Strategy Unit's report, alcohol harm reduction strategy for England, is published today. The strategy aims to reduce the harm caused by alcohol misuse by focusing on four areas for intervention:

- using more effective enforcement to tackle alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour;
- encouraging the alcoholic drinks industry to take a lead in promoting more responsible drinking and in reducing alcohol-related problems;
- enabling individual choice through improved and better targeted education and communication; and
- better support and treatment for those who suffer from the effects of alcohol misuse and their families.

Its findings will be implemented as Government policy. This is consistent with the commitment made in the NHS Plan to begin implementing an alcohol harm reduction strategy for England in 2004.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Disorder Penalty Notices

The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears): Home Office research findings summarising the main findings of the interim evaluation of pilots for penalty notices for disorder, which ran for 12 months from August and September 2002 to 2003, have been published today. The findings show that police officers have welcomed the scheme and are making good use of penalty notices for disorder. In particular, the pilots showed that the police find penalty notices for disorder a quick and effective tool for tackling the low-level drink-related nuisance offending that occurs late at night in city centres. Using a penalty notice for disorder saves police time and there has been a demonstrable switch from cautions and prosecutions in the pilot areas.

The issues raised by police officers about repeat offenders, "flagging" on PNC and taking of fingerprints and DNA have already been addressed. A programme is being developed that will identify repeat offenders on the computer database. A facility now exists to record penalty notices on PNC, and the Criminal Justice Act 2003 contains powers for the police to take DNA and fingerprints on arrest for recordable offences. These powers will be introduced on 5 April.

Copies of the research findings have been placed in the Library.

TREASURY

Public Sector Relocation

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): The report of Sir Michael Lyon's independent review of public sector relocation is published today. Copies are available in the Vote Office.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

National Minimum Wage

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): In July 2003 I asked the independent Low Pay Commission to report on the national minimum wage by the end of February 2004.

The Government are today publishing the Commission's 2004 report and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chair of the Commission, Adair Turner, and its other members for their work on this very important issue.

We asked the Commission to consider two issues. We asked them to look at possible fine-tuning of the minimum wage rates proposed for October 2004, in the light of the latest economic position. And we asked them, following the recommendation in their fourth report last spring, to look at the possible introduction of a new minimum wage rate for 16 and 17-year-olds.

The Commission have concluded, first, that the overall economic outlook remains favourable, with growth being slightly higher than forecast last year and the labour market remaining robust with high employment and very low unemployment. In addition, employment across low-paying sectors as a whole is continuing to grow and there seems to be little or no evidence that the minimum wage is having an adverse impact on these sectors. On the basis that the Commission believe these recommendations are affordable for business and will not have any significant effect on levels of employment, the Government have accepted the recommended rate increases for 2004.

The Commission have also considered whether to introduce a new minimum wage rate for 16 and 17-year-old workers. They have found continued evidence that some jobs in this age group offer very low rates of pay and little or no training, and concluded that it is important to introduce a minimum wage for 16 and 17-year-old workers, in order to stop exploitative rates of pay.

However it is clearly important to set any rate for this group cautiously. Unemployment and employment levels for 16 and 17-year-old workers are substantially worse than those for those aged 18 to 21. The Commission believe that a rate of around £3.00 per hour would have negligible impact on young people's decisions on whether to remain in education, and the

national implementation of Education Maintenance Allowances this autumn will encourage young people to stay on in education after they have completed compulsory schooling. The Commission have therefore recommended that a rate should be introduced for 16 and 17-year-olds, at £3.00 in October 2004. The Government have accepted this recommendation.

The Commission have also considered the position of young apprentices. Many young apprentices earn less than £3.00 an hour at 16 and 17, and many 18-year-old apprentices earn less than the development rate of £4.10 an hour. We are very concerned to ensure that employers continue to offer apprenticeships and, recognising the need for caution, the Commission have recommended extending the current exemption for apprentices aged under 19 to cover 16 and 17-year-old apprentices as well. They have also recommended extending this exemption to cover participants on specified pre-apprenticeship programmes. The Government have accepted this recommendation.

I have placed copies of this statement, the Report from the Low Pay Commission and our Regulatory Impact Assessment in the Libraries of both Houses.

Summary of recommendations in the Low Pay Commission's 2004 report and the Government's response

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE RATES

The adult rate of the minimum wage should be increased from the present hourly rate of £4.50 to £4.85 in October 2004.

Accept. This increase will take place on 1 October 2004.

The youth rate (which applies to 18–21 year olds) should be increased from the present hourly rate of £3.80 to £4.10 in October 2004.

Accept. This increase will take place on 1 October 2004.

YOUNG PEOPLE

The Government should introduce a minimum wage for 16–17 year olds, set at an hourly rate of £3.00 in October 2004.

Accept. We will introduce a new minimum wage rate for 16–17 year olds on 1 October 2004.

Apprentices aged 16 and 17 and participants on specified pre-apprenticeship programmes should be exempt from the new rate.

Accept.

AWARENESS

The Government should consider specific channels to promote awareness of the minimum wage for young people.

Accept. We will consider this point when developing the publicity campaign to inform people of the new rates this autumn.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Sustainable Communities

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Yvette Cooper): In February last year my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister published the Communities Plan. That plan was not simply about housing: it was about creating sustainable communities in all parts of the country, and we are following it up with a detailed programme of implementation. In July last year the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published "*Making it Happen—Thames Gateway and the Growth Areas*" and in February this year we set out our plans for the north in "*Making it Happen—The Northern Way*". I am now giving Members a further update on our plans for the growth areas.

One of our key objectives is to help tackle the long-term shortage of housing, and particularly affordable housing. Based on the potential set out in joint studies with partners, we are now working to deliver the additional 200,000 new homes identified in the Communities Plan for sustainable communities in the growth areas and London. This is in addition to the 930,000 already planned in the wider south-east by 2016, and subject to testing and examination through the Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) process.

These additional new homes are a key element in our response to the housing affordability problem which is seriously affecting the wider economy, business competitiveness, and the delivery of public services. Failure to respond to these pressures is directly harming communities and means that young people cannot live near their parents.

Constraining growth in order to divert it to other regions is not a solution. We are committed to enabling every region to perform to its full economic potential, and to narrow the gap in growth rates between them, but displacing investment in the south-east means it might well go abroad or not happen at all.

Later this week the Government intend to publish Kate Barker's review of housing supply which will consider the need for additional measures and on which we will consult. In the meantime we need to ensure that we and our regional and local partners are on course to deliver the full potential of the growth areas programme.

The regional Planning Framework

The growth areas will in part help meet demand close to London, and in part provide new opportunities in the north and east of the wider south-east, where there is substantial capacity for sustainable growth in new and expanded communities. The growth areas policy will also strengthen links between the south east and its adjoining regions, particularly the East Midlands, through Northamptonshire and the inclusion of Peterborough, and with Europe.

The areas that we are now taking forward were confirmed in RPG9 (for the wider south-east) published in 2001, because of their potential to take further sustainable growth, and to exploit major transport investment. The potential of Thames Gateway was established in RPG9a, and is being further developed in the Interregional Planning Statement which is being

prepared by the three Regional Planning Bodies which cover the Gateway. The potential for the newer growth areas has been independently assessed in studies which were published last year. These studies and supplementary local assessments have been key inputs to the preparation of proposals by regional partners for new Regional Planning Guidance for each area, which is then subject to public consultation and testing in public examination. The current position is tabled below:

Milton Keynes/ South Midlands	Mini RPG proposals published for public consultation July 2003; public examination starts 23 March 2004.
Ashford	Mini RPG proposals published July 2003, public examination held in December—Panel report submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister February 2004.
London—Stansted—Cambridge—Peterborough	Growth area proposals are included in draft RPG 14 for the East of England—proposals agreed by Regional Planning Panel February 2004 subject to further work on the Growth Area for completion by September 2004.
Thames Gateway	Interregional Planning Statement being draw up by Regional Planning bodies puts forward outline growth potential for confirmation by Regional planning Statements.

A more sustainable approach

The growth areas programme is about sustainable communities, not simply about housing. We are looking to create places where we integrate from the start a more sustainable approach to health, education, transport, the environment and natural resources. Jobs growth needs to balance housing rather than simply add to long distance commuting. Where there is an urban extension, growth should strengthen the existing town centre, enabling it to offer a wider range of services, and where there is to be a new settlement, it needs to complement, not weaken, its neighbouring centres. The challenge is to make the most of these opportunities to create communities which are better designed and more attractive to residents and investors and which will stand the test of time. There are good examples of this quality of development currently being delivered in Cambridge, Northampton, Milton Keynes and in the Abode scheme at Harlow, and in Thames Gateway in the Royal Docks and Kent Thameside. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment is working extensively with local partners across the Growth Areas to help realise this potential.

Infrastructure and services

One of the critical issues for new communities is ensuring that provision of infrastructure and services takes place in step with growth. Failure to do so places additional pressures on hard pressed existing facilities and will make the growth itself unattractive to investors, new arrivals and existing residents. Our task as Government is to put in place mechanisms with local and regional partners, and the private sector, to ensure that we tackle these issues together and give partners, investors and communities the reassurance they need. The approach we will follow is based on the following principles:

(i) that funding allocations for major services such as health and education respond effectively to rapid population growth;

(ii) that we will only support the development of individual growth locations which can be adequately supported by committed or planned transport services and infrastructure;

(iii) that for the major growth locations, we recognise the need for additional funding for local infrastructure services and environmental improvement to unlock key sites, alongside strengthened local delivery arrangements, established in consultation with local partners.

I can now report to the House on some of the early action which colleagues and I are taking to help deliver this approach.

Health

Creating new communities offers substantial potential for health benefits—through better design promoting healthier communities, responding to keyworker shortages in the health sector and providing health services more effectively from the outset. To support the development of Sustainable Communities, and reflect population growth, the department of Health is announcing a new funding package for the Growth Areas which will enable the NHS to increase local service capacity, including:

An additional £20 million of revenue funding per annum for 2004–05 and 2005–06, for those Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) that are already experiencing considerable population growth as a direct consequence of development of the four Growth Areas;

An additional £20 million of capital resources for allocation in 2005–06 to the 4 growth areas;

A Growth Areas Adjustment as part of future PCT allocations. This will apply from 2006–07. The detail of this adjustment will be worked through as part of Department of Health's review of its allocations policy which will take place later this year. It will ensure PCTs have the resources to put in place the additional capacity that planned population growth will require.

The aim will be to ensure that additional health and social care capacity (both primary and community and hospital-based services) is ready to open as new populations move into the areas. NHS and social care organisations will need to play a key role in each of the delivery vehicles being set up in the Growth Areas. Early engagement will ensure that they can respond positively to population growth; planning innovative services integrated where possible into other aspects of the public and civic infrastructure (e.g. health facilities with local libraries, schools, or shops) and to help design urban developments so that they promote healthy sustainable communities and tackle health inequalities. Staffing the extra service capacity required in the four Growth Areas will also be a major challenge for Health Service and other delivery partners. The optimal solution is to train and employ local people, both to aid

regeneration and promote healthy, sustainable communities, but also so as housing and travel difficulties are minimised.

Education

Improving education standards is a key objective of the Government, and of concern both for local communities and partners, and for prospective residents and investors in all the growth areas. The total capital funding available nationally for investment in school buildings has increased substantially—from less than £700 million in 1996–97 to £3.8 billion this year, and it will reach £5.1 billion in 2005–06. For example, just over £400 million (including £104 million Private Finance Initiative credits) has already been allocated to authorities and their schools covered by the Milton Keynes/South Midlands growth area over the period 2003–06. Within this over £200 million has been allocated largely by formula, and delivered through the Single Capital Pot, to meet modernisation and pupil needs. As part of the move to simplify the arrangements for allocating capital for pupil places, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) are introducing a mechanism whereby Local Education Authorities can apply for additional capital support to meet exceptional circumstances, including unusually high levels of growth. DfES will be discussing with rapid growth authorities their plans and funding needs.

Within the total capital support a major component that will address capacity and help all four growth areas is the Building Schools for the Future programme. This is a programme of rebuilding and refurbishment to ensure that secondary education has facilities of 21st century standards. The aim is to deliver this goal successfully within 10–15 years from 2005–06, subject to future public spending decisions; £2 billion is available for the programme from 2005–06. An announcement on the first wave authorities was made on 12 February, and a further announcement about future waves will be made later this year.

Local government services

More generally, rapidly growing populations can place substantial additional demand on services provided by local government. My right hon. Friend the Minister for Local and Regional Government has agreed to consider the impact of ceilings on rapid growth areas in the local government revenue support grant system and to do this in advance of the 2005–06 allocations.

Transport

Planning for large scale growth also offers opportunities for a more sustainable approach to transport through integrated decisions on development—location, design, density and mix of uses, linking with policies on the environment, health and education to create more sustainable travel choices.

The Local Transport Settlement in December 2003 included approval for a number of important schemes in the newer Growth Areas including the Cambridge to Huntingdon Guided Bus £65 million, Luton-Dunstable guided bus (£78 million), Milton Keynes Integrated Transport £15 million (including ODPM funding) the Northampton Quality Bus network £8 million.

On strategic transport, the newer growth areas will benefit from major commitments on rail such as West Coast mainline and on strategic roads, such as the M11 Junctions 8 to 9 widening, and the A14 in London-Stansted–Cambridge. In Milton Keynes/South Midlands, the schemes added last year to the Highways Agency programme included M1 widening from Luton (Junctions 6a to 10) and Luton to Milton Keynes (Junctions 10 to 13), A421 dualling (M1 Junction 13 to Bedford) and the Dunstable Northern Bypass (A5 to M1 link) (in total over £820 million of investment), and also Ashford M20, Junction 10A on the M20—decision last December.

In terms of other possible transport infrastructure schemes, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is working closely with the Department for Transport on the interface between growth and transport capacity, as in the study commissioned to look at these issues in the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough area. Decisions on specific proposals and priorities clearly need to be informed by a robust evidence base. On the proposal for an East-West Rail link between Oxford and Bedford, we are carefully considering the business case developed by the Consortium and its potential in relation to future development and in supporting east-west strategic direction across the growth area. Future decisions on any new rail projects and announcements will be taken in the light of the results of the Department for Transport's review of rail industry structure and organisation and the outcome of this year's Spending Review announcement.

Significant progress has also been made over the past six months towards realising enhanced transport infrastructure to support growth in the Gateway. This includes consultation by the Strategic Rail Authority on an Integrated Kent Franchise that incorporates Channel Tunnel Rail Link domestic services to Stratford, Ebbsfleet, Medway, Sittingbourne and on to Ashford and East Kent; a provisional offer (subject to conditions) from the Department for Transport of £200 million of Private Finance Initiative credits towards the construction of the Thames Gateway Bridge; agreement between the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Transport for London to jointly fund the improvement of the A206 in Bexley; and the approval by the Department for Transport of a Transport and Works Act application to extend the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) from the Royal Docks under the River Thames to Woolwich. The first phase of the West Thurrock regeneration Ring Road will shortly be completed; the DLR extension to City Airport is on site and on programme; and the construction of the second Swale Crossing in Kent will commence this year.

Water and natural resources

We are committed to household growth that is located and designed in ways that respect the environment and minimise resource use. New homes and neighbourhoods should be built to new and exacting standards of resource efficiency as an investment for the future. The Sustainable Buildings Task Group has been asked to make recommendations to Government on how this can be done in new and existing homes.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the growth areas have the water they need and necessary sewerage infrastructure. The relevant water undertakers and environmental regulators have been involved in the development of the growth area proposals. Opportunities for developing sustainable new water resources in the south-east are very limited, so improving the management of water demand by improved conservation of existing resources will be crucial. Water companies will need to identify options for demand management, including better leakage control and higher levels of water efficiency. And we will support innovative solutions for water management. In Ashford, for example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is providing funding for an Integrated Water Management Strategy (covering water supply, wastewater treatment, and flood defence and alleviation) by the Environment Agency.

Additional funding for local infrastructure

Through the Growth Areas Fund administered by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Government has made £446 million available to the Thames Gateway and £164 million available to the three newer growth areas for the three financial years 2003–06. A key objective of the funding is to remove the barriers to implementation in the major growth sites.

In the newer growth areas examples of recent funding include £20 million to support infrastructure and site works for the new communities around Cambridge, £5 million to progress the Bedford western bypass which has the potential to unlock 3,500 dwellings and similar projects in Northampton, Wellingborough and other locations. We are also funding preparatory work to plan new services; for example £0.8 million has been awarded to plan local health care services and better health across the sub-region and funding has been provided for a range of master planning and economic visioning studies. We are improving the environment. Overall in the 4 growth areas, around £30 million has been allocated to 'greenspace' projects, to create new strategic green buffer areas and improve countryside access around key growth locations, e.g. Rainham Marshes, the new Nene Valley Regional Park in Northamptonshire, and extensions to the Forest of Marston Vale. Funding post 2005–06 will be determined through Government's expenditure review this year.

In the Thames Gateway, funding has been allocated towards land acquisition and site preparation in key brownfield areas including Lower Lea, and Rochester Riverside, and the completion of the A206 Thamesmead spine road in Bexley. Support has been provided for the renewal of key town centres at Barking, Dartford, and Gravesend, and to expand the University Campuses at Southend and Medway

Delivery Mechanisms

To deliver all this needs a concerted approach between partners. Within Government, a Cabinet Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, brings all the key Departments together to consider issues around growth in the south east. In the newer growth areas we have established, at the sub regional level, a new Inter-Regional Board for the Milton Keynes/South Midlands growth area which brings together regional and local partners across the three regions to focus on strategic issues and implementation. At the local delivery level we are establishing six new vehicles after consultation with local partners—local authority led vehicles at Cambridge, Ashford, Bedford and Aylesbury and subject to consultation, an Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) for West Northamptonshire and a Urban Development Area for Milton Keynes. Further discussions are under way for other growth locations.

In the Thames Gateway we are establishing a new Gateway Delivery Office to manage the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister funding programme, and local partnerships which will focus on the key development and will co-ordinate partner inputs around an agreed framework. These include two Urban Development Corporations, one already established in Thurrock, and a second (subject to Parliamentary approval) in East London, a URC in Southend and partnerships in Kent Thameside, Basildon, Medway, and Swale.

For many key locations in the growth areas, development is already under way, implementing existing plans. We want to ensure early delivery and the measures we are taking will support this as well as laying the foundations for future growth. The scale, location and timing of that future growth will be determined through the Regional Planning Guidance process, including independent testing and examination, which will begin shortly for the Milton Keynes/South Midlands growth area and the Government will revise its plans as necessary to take account of that process.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Supplementary Estimates

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): Subject to Parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport DEL will be increased by £24,367,000 from £1,545,936,000 to £1,570,303,000 and the administration costs limits will be decreased by £205,000 from £47,187,000 to £46,982,000.

Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital is as set out in the following table:

		New DEL		
	Change	*Voted*	*Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	3,462,000	201,906,000	1,227,195,000	1,429,101,000
Capital	20,905,000	109,856,000	118,654,000	228,510,000
Depreciation*	0	−3,555,000	−83,753,000	−87,308,000
Total	24,367,000	308,207,000	1,262,096,000	1,570,303,000

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending, and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from increased expenditure offset by increased appropriations in aid of £9,000 to Sport, £15,000 to historic buildings, monuments and sites and £30,000 to administration and research; transfers to capital DEL of £200,000 from administration and research, of £40,000

from sport and £65,000 from VisitBritain; and transfers from non-voted spending for accruing superannuation liability contributions of £2,230,000 to the British Library, £52,000 to the public lending right, £104,000 to the Football Licensing Authority and £1,327,000 to English Heritage;

The decrease in the Department's administration costs limit arises from transfers of £5,000 to increase the Royal Household's grant in aid and £200,000 to capital DEL.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from transfers from sport and VisitBritain's grant in aid of £40,000 and £65,000 respectively to facilitate internal delivery programmes; utilisation of £20,800,000 non-voted DEL from the unused balance of the Department for Work and Pensions' end-year flexibility entitlement under the PES pool arrangement to increase European Development Fund expenditure borne on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Estimate.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 16 March 2004

NORTHERN IRELAND

Water Cannon

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Jane Kennedy): I have today placed in the Library guidance developed by the Association of Chief Police Officers on the deployment and use of water cannon, together with a medical statement on the use of water cannon by the independent medical panel. Copies of these documents have been placed in the Library of the House.

With the publication of this guidance and the final medical statement, the water cannon purchased by the Police Service of Northern Ireland can now be deployed operationally for use in appropriate circumstances.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

e-Innovations Fund

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Phil Hope): The Government will be announcing the first round of successful bids for matched funding to support e-Innovation in local councils. Some 34 councils will receive matched funding of £6.2m to deliver their innovative ideas by March 2005.

These projects complement the work of individual councils, pathfinders, national projects and partnerships that are already being carried out under the programme, in particular by driving forward "cutting edge" projects, which look beyond December 2005.

This round of support for e-innovations targets the following four themes:

E-Learning

This includes the internal sharing of information and good practice, staff development and better use of e-government to assist service transformation (i.e. not mainstream education/schools).

Bridging the Digital Divide

This includes using e-government in ways that help services to reach those socially excluded and in particular addressing the concern that e-government might lead to some people being further isolated from the support and services they need.

Emergent Technology for Better Government

Innovative use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to improve services.

Local Authority E-Business

Better use of ICT to improve internal business processes in councils, including service planning and performance management.

A full list of the councils receiving funding is tabled below:

Successful e-Innovation Bids

Local Authority	*Project Title*	*ODPM Grant Contribution*
	Bridging The Digital Divide	
Camden LB	Virtual Viewing—Extending Choice Through Virtual Tours	200,000
Chiltern DC	Seeing The Divide—A Picture Paints A 1000 Words	62,000
Derbyshire CC	Helping Older People Bridge The Digital Divide	152,500
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk BC	Community Heritage Stores—Engaging The Wider Community Online	78,000
Manchester CC	The Manchester E-Markets—Mems—Project	100,000
North Cornwall DC	Rural E-Champions—Bridging The Digital Divide	50,000
Preston CC	E-City Preston—Bridging The Digital Divide In England's Newest City	300,000
Sandwell MBC	Personalised Access Authentication	250,000
Sutton LB	Widening Community Access To Services	125,000
West Devon DC	SMS Access Channel In Rural Areas	50,000
Woking BC	Trusted Partner Access	110,000
	e-Business	
Cambridgeshire CC	Local Operational Partnership Scheme (Lops)	200,000
Caradon DC	Local Authority E-Business	62,320
East Sussex CC	East Sussex In Figures	130,000
Knowsley MBC	Exploiting Information Management	75,000
Lewisham LB	Electronic Invoicing	135,000
Uttlesford DC	Uniting Services For Our Community	78,000
West Sussex CC	The Mysociety Partnership	250,000
	e-Learning	
East Northamptonshire DC	Elp (E Learning Programme)	75,000
Lambeth LB	Web Wise And Web Watch	150,000
Lancaster CC	The Learning Ladder	50,000
Tameside MBC	Knowledge Management	350,000
Teignbridge DC	Prince2—Practitioner 'E' & Distance Learning	50,700
	New And Emergent Technology	
Colchester BC	Questions On The Move	90,000
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	The East Riding Digital Learning Community (Die)	125,000
Hammersmith and Fulham LB	Using New Technology To Improve Parking Services	335,000
Liverpool CC	Text 2 City of Liverpool	200,000
Merton LB	Enhance The Level Of Domiciliary Monitoring And Emergency Support By Using Chromatic Technology In The Homes Of Elderly, Disabled And Newly Discharged People	214,000
Newham, LB	*Regentv*	460,000
Rossendale BC	Open Source Software	502,500
Somerset CC	Self-Service In Libraries Using RFID	112,500
South Lakeland DC	3d GIS Virtual Town Planning Model	66,000
Test Valley BC	Local Services Link	494,000
Westminster LB	Soho Wireless Technology	500,000
TOTAL		6,182,520

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Annual Report on Progress towards Sustainable Development

The Minister for the Environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): I am pleased to announce that the 2003 UK Government annual report on progress towards sustainable development, "*Achieving a better quality of life*" was launched today. This is the fourth and last annual report of progress against the 1999 Sustainable Development Strategy for the UK.

The report sets out the progress and key developments made towards sustainable development since the 1999 strategy, and brings together the latest data on the 15 headline indicators which comprise the 'quality of life barometer'. It also provides an overview of many of the initiatives and mechanisms that the UK Government have put in place that help contribute to 'a better quality of life for everyone'.

The headline indicators show that overall we are making progress across the three pillars of sustainable development: the economy, society and the environment. However we are doing better in some areas than others. It recognises that much more remains to be done—by Government, business and the individual—to put the UK firmly on a path towards sustainable development.

The UK Government, in partnership with the Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Administration, will soon be consulting to develop a new strategy for the UK to provide a strong basis for renewed action to deliver sustainable development.

The report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses, and is also available on the UK Government's sustainable development website.

CABINET OFFICE

Referendum Guidance

The Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Douglas Alexander): The Government have today published guidance to civil servants and NDPB Board members and staff on their role and conduct during the referendum campaigns for elected regional assemblies and the accompanying referendums on local government structures.

The Government believe that people who serve in public life as members of public bodies should not be precluded from taking part in the referendum campaigns—whether for a yes or no vote—in their capacity as private citizens. However, where they decide to participate in such activity they should do so in accordance with the requirements of this guidance.

Copies of the guidance have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Degree Awarding Powers and University Title Criteria

The Minister for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education (Alan Johnson): I am today publishing the results of the consultation on proposed new criteria for degree awarding powers and university title, which ended on 12 December 2003. The consultation followed a commitment in the White Paper "The Future of Higher Education" to modernise the criteria governing the granting of degree awarding powers (DAP) and to allow university title (UT) to be granted on the basis of taught DAP and student numbers.

There were mixed views on the proposal to allow teaching-focused universities, with universities generally opposed and other higher education institutions (HEIs) in support. Most respondents felt the proposed criteria for taught DAP were both clearer than the current criteria and strengthen the requirements staff have to meet. Most universities supported retaining the current student number criterion for UT with other HEIs divided on whether the level should be maintained or lowered. More respondents than not were in favour of allowing specialist institutions to be eligible for UT.

The proposal for DAP in future to be granted for six year terms, renewable subject to a satisfactory audit was opposed by most respondents. Two-thirds of universities and virtually all other HEIs expressing an opinion were against the proposal. The Standing Committee of Principals cited legal difficulties with the proposed changes. In light of these concerns, we will issue a discussion paper on renewable DAP shortly. We want to balance the concerns expressed with the Government's desire to ensure that the quality and reputation of higher education in England and Wales is maintained. The moratorium on new applications for degree awarding powers will remain in place whilst this matter is discussed further with the higher education sector and others. In the meantime, the moratorium on new applications for university title under the current criteria is lifted.

The consultation report has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and is available on the Department for Education and Skills website at: www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conResults.cfm?consultationId=1226.

School Teachers Review Body Recommendations

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Mr. Charles Clarke): The second part of the thirteenth report of the School Teachers' Review Body is being published today. It covers all matters related to the Rewards and Incentives Agreement and a range of residual matters not covered in the first part published in November 2003. Copies are available in the Vote Office and the Library of the House of Lords and at http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/payandperformance/pay/2004/STRBreportMarch2004.

In making their recommendations, the Review Body were required to have regard to the matters set out in the remit letters of 1 August 2002, 11 July 2003 and 9 January 2004. The STRB report deals with a wide range of weighty and complex issues and I particularly want to thank them for the exemplary way they have responded to the additional remit on issues related to the

upper pay scale. I remain indebted to both the Review Body and the other partners for the continued dedication and professionalism that they bring to this process. The STRB recommendations are set out below followed in each case by my response.

I am seeking consultation comments on the report and my response by 16 April 2004.

Upper Pay Scale

The STRB have recommended the following:

The content of Annexes A and B need to be reflected in pay legislation;

Annexes A and B are further clarified, strengthened and communicated in the way set out above;

The upper pay scale should now cease at UPS3;

(a) that a new excellent teacher scheme is established;

(b) that the scheme should be open only to classroom teachers who have reached UPS3 and who demonstrate that they have distinguished themselves at that level;

(c) that the period before a UPS3 teacher become eligible to attain the status of an excellent teacher should normally be three years and that the first awards under the scheme should be made in September 2007;

(d) that the scheme as developed should take into account the following considerations:

it should include a process for application and assessment as rigorous as the AST process, using the same concepts of national criteria and a national assessment model;

it should include an element of external assessment;

the criteria should ensure that only the very best teachers can achieve the new status provided by the scheme and should include a programme of study leading to an appropriate qualification;

the salary should reflect the quality of improvement in teaching and learning intended to result from the scheme.

I welcome the positive and helpful way the STRB have responded to the issues around the upper pay scale. The depth of their response indicates the seriousness with which they undertook this additional remit and I am grateful for this thoroughness.

The Rewards and Incentives Agreement I signed with our pay partners on 9 January affirmed two important principles. The first was that good classroom teachers should be able to aspire to a salary which reflects their important achievements in raising standards. The second was that the highest rewards for classroom teachers should be awarded for excellence.

I am particularly pleased that, through their recommendations that the upper pay scale should cease at UPS3 and that a new excellent teacher scheme be established, the STRB too recognise the importance of these principles, I therefore endorse these two proposals.

The STRB has made further recommendations concerning amplifying and clarifying the criteria for progression on the upper pay scale and putting them in the Pay Document; and further defining the detail of an excellent teacher scheme. I would welcome comments from all statutory consultees on these additional proposals.

Main Pay Scale and Threshold Assessment

The STRB recommend the following :

(a) on the basis of a teacher's performance and professional development over the past year the head teacher should decide and record in writing whether or not he or she has achieved at least the standard required to merit an increment on the main scale;

(b) where performance is judged to be outstanding and continues at that level for two years it should merit a double increment;

(c) where performance falls below the standard required, the increment should be deferred and an improvement plan should be put in place, with the appropriate support. The decision to defer should be reviewed in mid-year after which the increment would be backdated to the previous September, provided that the necessary progress had been made. A continuing unsatisfactory performance would result in the withholding of the increment.

During discussions on ways of ensuring appropriate rigour in performance management and related pay decisions, the parties give careful consideration to the development of a common system, building on the practices which already exist and taking into account the model employed in certain schools.

I am pleased that the STRB share my strong belief that,

a rigorous performance management system, robustly applied by school leaders should be the hub of all progression.

I further share their concerns that heads have difficulty distinguishing between the performance of individual teachers and agree that a more explicit linkage between performance, professional development and progression might go some way to address this issue. These STRB recommendations are a helpful step forward and I propose to press ahead with proposals to ensure that progression on the main pay scale is treated in this way from September 2005.

I too believe that these decisions about pay progression can best be made within a consistent framework for performance management in schools. Part of the rationale for my proposal, put forward jointly with the co-signatories to the Rewards and Incentives Agreement was the need to encourage fair and objective decisions on pay progression. I therefore also endorse the STRB's recommendation to consider carefully with parties the need to develop a common system.

Threshold Assessment

The STRB recommend the following: that, over the next 18 months:

(a) the Department and, where appropriate, the Welsh Assembly Government, take action to ensure that:

a. all heads have received appropriate training on linking pay and performance; and

b. a satisfactory appeal route for disputes over pay decisions, which includes an independent element,

(b) the Department and, where appropriate, the Welsh Assembly Government, work with the statutory consultees:

a. to maintain existing standards of decision-making on threshold applications; and

b. to establish a quality assurance system as envisaged in paragraph 12 of the joint proposal.

from September 2005, threshold assessments are made at school level in the context of the school's developed performance management system; and external validation of the threshold assessment decisions of the teacher is discontinued.

The STRB have made a number of strong recommendations about the future of threshold assessment arrangements, which I accept in principle. I note the STRB cites evidence from the PwC study, which shows that threshold assessment has largely bedded in and the important role external assessment is likely to have played in that process. I welcome their statement that subject to improvements to the performance management system and the maintenance of threshold standards, they,

"see no absolute need to retain the external assessment system."

I too am keen to ensure that we continue to maintain appropriate mechanisms for ensuring continued fairness and equity in threshold decisions and I am grateful for the Review Body's suggestions for securing that this is the case. As recommended by the STRB I propose to consult on the arrangements for the light touch validation of performance management systems and the best way to maintain threshold standards. As teacher appraisal is devolved, proposals regarding performance management systems in Wales are a matter for the Welsh Assembly Government. On the narrow issue of the timing of the ending of the current threshold assessment scheme, I can see considerable gains—including significant financial savings—from maintaining the end date of August 2004, but would welcome views from all statutory consultees.

I am pleased to endorse the STRB recommendation that heads should be trained on linking pay to performance. Work is already in hand to expand the existing range of flexible training materials for head teachers and governors to include a further element focusing on the links between performance and pay decisions. The recommendations of the Review Body are helpful to the development of this package which we hope to progress with the help of the other pay partners.

Local Approaches to Pay

The STRB have recommended the following (in bold):

The parties consider the proposal we have described and present us with their evidence and views by September 2004.

I welcome the rigorous and methodical way the STRB have approached the issues around local and regional pay. They have clearly set out a range of difficult issues which need to be looked at when considering how best one should tackle any residual barriers to recruitment and retention that may still exist within our current pay system of geographical banding. Whilst noting the importance of each school tackling any other barriers to their success—including clear leadership and management structures, appropriate and available CPD and other measures designed to promote a positive environment for staff—they have offered interesting proposals for resolving many of those hard core recruitment and retention issues which might remain.

I welcome the STRB's recommendation to consult with other parties on this proposal and provide evidence from the Department by September.

Additionally, I am clear that the implications of this proposal will need to be considered alongside recommendations forthcoming from the Adrian Smith review on mathematics post 14 where, here too, there were interesting proposals about how to tackle subject recruitment difficulties in specific schools and areas.

Teachers' Pay System and Career Structure

The STRB have recommended the following:

the AST spine is reduced to 18 points with values parallel to points 1 to 18 of the leadership group spine not later than September 2006;

clear record is made of their annual review and subsequent decision on salary progression.

I welcome the STRB's recognition of the importance and distinctiveness of the AST role. L

Leading excellent curriculum and teaching practice in schools and institutions beyond their own school . . . '

I agree that we must ensure that they are afforded the necessary status within the school structure as befits the very important role they play in so many schools. Therefore, I endorse their recommendation to reduce the AST spine to 18 points with values equivalent to the first 18 points of the leadership group spine.

Furthermore I believe, all teachers, irrespective of their role, should expect to have clear records from their annual review which would set out amongst other important issues such as objectives and professional development needs, any decisions made about salary progression. I therefore also endorse the STRB's proposals that ASTs be entitled to a clear record of their annual review and any subsequent pay decision.

I am grateful to the STRB for their consideration of the issues regarding Chartered London Teacher Status and I propose that an appropriate amendment is made to the STPCD in September 2004 to cover this.

Special Pay Arrangements

The STRB have recommended the following:

LEAs review their procedures during 2004 to ensure that unattached teachers are not at a disadvantage compared to attached teachers, and the National Employers' Organisation oversees the review and published the results so that they are available to the other parties.

the Department sets up a comprehensive database on unattached teachers, covering numbers, location and roles.

the Department draws up guidance, in consultation with the interested parties, including BATOD, on how the payment of SEN allowance 2 might take account of the enhancement of the teaching of SEN children brought about by such specialist qualifications.

the safeguarding of the social priority allowance and the inner London area supplement is removed with effect from 1 September 2004.

the Department considers the following navigation aids when revising the Document:

Adding a comprehensive index, with cross-references to other useful linked documents such as explanatory notes for heads, governors and LEAs and model school teachers pay policy;

Including a 3–4 summary at the beginning describing the teachers' career options and pay system using diagrams or; and

Consulting on areas for pay simplification, including the balance between guidance and formal provisions.

We also recommend the provision of more training for governors in the understanding of the teachers' pay system, the navigation around the document and its use in considering the school pay policy.

I am grateful to the STRB for their consideration of a range of further issues around the smooth and appropriate operation of the structures of the teacher's pay system.

The STRB is right to draw our attention to concerns about the position of unattached teachers. I too think it is important for all teachers, whether they are attached to a school or not, to be treated fairly and equitably and I welcome their recommendations.

I support the idea of a review of LEA procedures related to unattached teachers and I look to NEOST to take this forward as they see fit. On the further recommendation about the establishment of a comprehensive database on unattached teachers, it would not be practicable, for a number of reasons, to seek to develop a new database at this point. The best mechanism for delivering this will be through the adult common basic data set, which, from 2006, I anticipate being the key and most comprehensive source for information about the school workforce, including unattached teachers. I therefore accept this recommendation in the context of the developments on the adult common basic data set.

I am content to discuss with relevant parties how the payment of SEN allowance 2 might take into account of the enhancement of the teaching of SEN children brought about by specialist qualifications. The outcome of this exercise should be without prejudice to consideration of the wider allowance framework.

I appreciate the attention given by the STRB to the matter of safeguarding, particularly their exposition of the balance needed between the need to protect teachers salary and the potentially inhibitory effect safeguarding can have on necessary and desirable changes in school organisation. They remind us that their thinking on both management allowances and recruitment and retention allowances in part one to this report took into account their desire to avoid long term payments of increasing value for purposes which might no longer apply. I welcome their recognition that paragraph 48 to the STPCD contains sufficient flexibility to render the need to offer separate specific payments for both social priority allowance and the Inner London area supplement unnecessary. I hope this will be a welcome flexibility and simplification for schools. I am also grateful for their steer on the issues they believe should be discussed in our conversations with key parties on the issue of safeguarding. I am minded therefore to press ahead with the abolition of safeguarding for both the social priority allowance and the inner London area supplement from September 2004.

I also welcome the STRB's further comments on simplification of the existing pay system through looking at how we might better position the content of the document to make it accessible to the range of audiences that are required to use it. This is something of an iterative process for us but one which it is important that we press on with, a key part of which is making the pay system itself more streamlined. I therefore accept the STRB's recommendations around simplifying the document including the further need to consult on more substantive simplification of the pay systems. I wholeheartedly endorse the need to ensure governors are clear on the operation of the pay system and the flexibilities within it. As I have already mentioned, work has already begun on devising a toolkit for trainers on teachers' pay and pay policies, I propose that this training be disseminated to governors and head teachers together.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 17 March 2004

TREASURY

Debt and Reserves Management Report 2004–05

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Ruth Kelly): I am pleased to announce to the House that the *Debt and Reserves Management Report 2004–05* is being published today. Copies will be available in the House Library at the conclusion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget Statement.

Housing

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): Kate Barker's report *Review of Housing Supply, Final Report and Recommendations*, is published today. Copies are available in the Vote Office.

DEFENCE

Service Personnel Process Review

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): With effect from 1 April 2004 the three single service personnel agencies will cease to have agency status. This decision resulted from the service personnel process review that was conducted last year and referred to by my right hon. Friend the Member for East Kilbride (Mr. Ingram) on 17 July 2002, *Official Report*, column 277–78W.

The review also identified the fact that the career management and manpower planning work of the three service manning agencies did not wholly suit agency status, because they performed primarily support and enabling functions rather than being concerned with the provision of a clear and discrete deliverable service. I therefore concluded that agency status for the agencies (Naval Manning, Army Personnel and RAF Personnel Management Agency) should cease.

I am pleased to tell the House that a considerable amount of work continues in many other areas. It includes further reviews of tri-service recruiting and welfare and many of the review recommendations have been swept into a service personnel plan, parallel with and linked to the equipment programme and within the framework of the defence White Paper published last December.

I intend to report on further progress to the House later in the year.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 18 March 2004

TRANSPORT

Road Haulage Modernisation Fund

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Jamieson): On Wednesday 17 March my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the Department for Transport would be allocating resources to allow the more worthwhile road haulage modernisation fund (RHMF) projects to continue.

I am pleased to announce today that the Department will be allocating a budget of £3 million in 2004–05 so that more of the haulage industry can benefit from projects to help them apply the most up to date and efficient practices. The budget will also allow the completion of some projects started during the current financial year.

The list of projects includes:

(a) A further phase of the Driver Training programme to promote Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving (SAFED).

(b) A further phase of the Fuel Economy Advisor programme to encourage more fuel efficient operations, using regional seminars and site specific advice.

(c) A further phase of training using the truck driver simulator—more drivers will benefit from simulator training followed by a study to understand better the medium term benefits of simulator training.

(d) A further phase of the Respect for People project—to consolidate industry take-up of this project, which spreads best employment practice by encouraging the use of key performance indicators so that operators can benchmark their performance against the best companies.

(e) The development of a careers website—to raise the industry's profile and draw attention to its opportunities.

In addition, the Department will provide funding to complete the training of 1,200 existing candidates for licence acquisition, with over half of these being funded through to achievement of their Logistics Skills Award. We are also considering proposals made through the Road Haulage Forum to fund some research projects to help understand recruitment and training needs and how they can be met.

This programme reflects the Government's commitment to help the industry to help itself. I look forward to discussing this programme with industry stakeholders at the next meeting of the Road Haulage Forum.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. John Spellar): The accounts of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIA 8/03) for the year ended 31 March 2003 incorporating the Reports of the Local Government Auditor and the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon will be laid before the NI Assembly on Thursday 18 March 2004.

Copies of the Northern Ireland Assembly Paper have been placed in the House of Commons Library at Westminster and in the NI Assembly Library at Stormont.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Fisheries

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): From 1 January 1999 all British registered fishing vessels over 10m in length and catching more than 2 tonnes of quota stocks have had to demonstrate an economic link with fisheries dependent communities in the United Kingdom. This link can be demonstrated in a number of ways—for example, by vessels landing at least 50 per cent. by weight of their quota catch into the UK or by employing a crew of whom at least 50 per cent. are normally resident in a UK coastal area.

In 2002, 1,362 vessels caught more than 2 tonnes of quota stocks and in each case achieved a satisfactory economic link, primarily through landings into the UK.

The arrangements have also resulted in UK registered but foreign-owned vessels continuing to land and incur expenditure at UK ports or making quota available for re-distribution to the inshore fleet. Compared with 1998, benefits have included:

a 40 per cent. increase in the volume of quota stocks landed into the UK by foreign owned UK registered vessels. This figure is proportionally higher when viewed against cuts in TACs since 1998;

a significant increase in the number of landings into the UK by Anglo-Spanish vessels, resulting in additional expenditure at our ports of some £3 million; and

the provision of almost 500 tonnes of quota for redistribution to our inshore fleet, notably nephrops, North Sea sole and North Sea cod.

A full report by the fisheries departments in the United Kingdom on the operation of the economic link measures in 2002 and their impact has been placed in the Library of the House.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Pension Protection Fund

The Minister for Pensions (Malcolm Wicks): Improving member protection is a Government priority. As outlined in the Pensions Bill, we intend to introduce the new pension protection fund, which will enhance protection for pension scheme members and improve confidence in pension provision.

It will protect members of defined benefit and hybrid schemes by paying compensation should their employer become unable to meet their pension obligations following insolvency.

Our intention, subject to parliamentary approval, is that we protect as many individuals as we can, from as early a date as possible. Therefore, although we have a

challenging timetable, our plans are to have the organisation up and running in April 2005. In order to do this we need to carry out essential activities, which will require some expenditure in advance of the legislation achieving Royal Assent.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £450,000 for this new service will be sought in a supplementary estimate for the Department for Work and Pensions. Pending that approval, this urgent expenditure will be met by a repayable cash advance from the contingencies fund.

Housing Benefit

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, I am announcing the publication of performance statistics for local authority administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit (HB and CTB) for the third quarter of 2003–04. A copy of the quarterly statistics for all local authorities in Great Britain has been placed in the Library and has been published on the Department for Work and Pensions website at http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/hb_ctb/performance.asp

Publishing these statistics is part of our strategy for reforming housing benefit and for ensuring that local authorities are accountable for their performance in administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit.

Housing benefit and council tax benefit performance statistics show that in the third quarter of 2003–04 for those authorities that submitted data:

155 authorities reported meeting the 36-day standard of processing new claims, compared with 134 authorities in the third quarter of 2002–03;

the average reported number of days to process new claims reduced from 53 days in the third quarter of 2002–03 to 47 days in the third quarter of 2003–04;

175 authorities reported the standard of processing changes in circumstances, on average within nine days, compared to 166 in the third quarter of 2002–03.

The statistics are un-audited and are provided quarterly by local authorities to my Department.

The audited Best Value performance information for English local authorities for 2002–03 was published by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister on 18 December 2003 on the best value performance indicators website at: http://www.bvpi.gov.uk/home.asp.

A copy is available in the Library.

The most recent corresponding data for local authorities in Wales are also for 2002–03. These are published on the Audit Commission website at: http://www.lgdu-wales.gov.uk/eng/Project.asp?id=SX99A1-A77F4BA8

A paper copy of the relevant extract from this site is available in the Library.

The most recent corresponding data for local authorities in Scotland are also for 2002–03 and are in the Accounts Commission publication *"Performance Indicators 2002/2003: Benefits, Finance and Corporate Issues"* a copy of which is available in the Library.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): The key targets have been set for the chief executive of the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency (AFPAA) for the financial year 2004–05. The targets build upon progress made by the agency since it formed on 1 April 1997 and reflect the high level of service delivery required for pay, pensions and allowances, and a change programme to deliver new harmonised joint personnel administration for the Armed Forces.

To Deliver Pay

To make 99.9 per cent. of all pay payments by the due date (excluding late payments caused by events determined to be outside the control of the Agency).

To keep the monthly error rate of accuracy for the volume of payments within 0.1 per cent.

To Deliver Pension Services

To make 99 per cent. of all pension payments (including new awards) by the due date (excluding late payments caused by events determined to be outside the control of the Agency).

To keep the monthly error rate of accuracy for the volume of payments within 0.1 per cent.

To Support the Delivery of Joint Personnel Administration Programme

Subject to Main Gate approval, Joint Personnel Administration Partnering Agreement to be signed, by 30 September 2004 for the Manufacture, Roll Out and Delivery.

To commence the Roll Out of Joint Personnel Administration Core System for the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and Army by October 2005, May 2006 and October 2006 respectively.

To transform the Agency to Deliver the full Potential of the Joint Personnel Administration Environment

To deliver Joint Personnel Administration Centre capability through six stages, commencing, June 2004 Stage 1 and March 2005 Stage 2.

To deliver 100 per cent. of Key critical path milestones in Agency Transition Plan.

To deliver a cost effective change programme in accordance with departmental priorities

To deliver 96 per cent. of major change to ensure individual development Projects are delivered to specification and schedule.

To deliver 96 per cent. of all minor change in accordance with Joint Change Management Team plans agreed by partner and customer.

To Develop targets for implementation in 2005–06 that will measure the delivery of Pay. Pensions and Personnel Services against Service Level Agreements

To achieve the agreed service levels of all Performance Assessment Indicators (levels 4 and 5 of current contract Schedule 2) not already included in Key Targets 1 and 2.

To meet approved efficiency targets for the delivery of core services

To reduce the unit cost by 6 per cent. in 2004–05 which will contribute to a 12 per cent. reduction over a 4-year period from 2002–03 for the delivery of core pay and personnel administration.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crown Prosecutors

The Solicitor-General (Ms Harriet Harman): My right hon. Friend the Attorney-General has made the following ministerial statement.

"I wish to announce the start of a review of the Code for Crown Prosecutors following the recent developments in prosecutors' powers. Section 10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 requires the Director of Public Prosecutions to issue a Code for Crown Prosecutors in order to give guidance on the general principles to be applied in prosecutorial decision making. It enables casework decisions to be made fairly, consistently and independently.

The Code is an important public document, which allows everyone to see and understand the basis upon which prosecution decisions are made. The Code is kept under continual review to ensure that its principles remain appropriate. The current edition of the Code was published in October 2000, which involved an extensive internal, external and public consultation exercise.

Following the public consultation process last time, every aspect of the Code was reconsidered and the basic principles were acknowledged as being sound. Accordingly, this review will not extend to any reconsideration of the basic two-test principle of prosecuting on the basis of ensuring that the evidence provides a realistic prospect of conviction and that it is in the public interest to prosecute the case.

This review will therefore be limited in scope to the implications of a number of key recent developments, which have the potential to impact on decisions made within the framework of the Code. The most significant of these is the charging initiative under which prosecutors will assume responsibility from the police for determining appropriate charges to bring against alleged offenders, introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 2003. There are also other significant changes to be considered, such as conditional cautioning.

The Crown Prosecution Service, with appropriate consultation, is therefore to review the Code for Crown Prosecutors to take account of these recent developments. The review team has now been established and will be writing to organisations and individuals with an interest in the Code, asking for comments on the particular areas under consideration."

I welcome this review and will be taking a close interest in its progress.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Comprehensive Review of Parole and Lifer Processes

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): The right hon. Member for Brent, South, (Mr. Boateng), when Prisons Minister, announced the Comprehensive Review of Parole and Lifer Processes on 11 February 2000. Its remit was to examine the parole and lifer systems, identify the key issues to be faced over the next five years and recommend appropriate changes to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the relevant procedures. The review also included a "Better Quality Services" review and the first quinquennial review of the Parole Board since it became an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body in 1996.

The review made 118 recommendations relating to a range of process and organisational improvements, which included: reducing the Discretionary Conditional Release (Parole) review timetable; Improving the efficiency of the mandatory lifer review process; Changing lifer oral hearing procedures to improve efficiency and quality of decision-making; Improving dossier content quality and reducing duplication and waste; Clarification of roles and possible efficiencies in decision making; Organisation of the Parole Board; some cross-cutting issues, including information for victims; Improving Secretary of State Directions for the release of determinate sentence prisoners.

Significant achievements have been made on a number of review recommendations. For example:

Lifer cases and oral hearings

A new scheme for the preparation and submission of mandatory lifer dossiers has considerably speeded up the review process. A new key performance target for lifer dossier production, requiring 80 per cent. of dossiers to be sent to the Parole Board on target, is now being achieved. Oral hearings to review the recall of extended sentence prisoners have been successfully introduced.

The Parole Board has developed a system for appraising judicial members of the Board, who currently chair most of the Board's oral hearings.

Recalls

New procedures to ensure timely processing of recall requests made by the Probation Service have been successfully introduced. New arrangements for handling representations against recall have been implemented and which provide for a greater input from the probation service. Furthermore, the Secretary of State has issued new Directions to the Board on considering of recalls and their representations against recall, which has clarified the Board's role and the basis on which it is asked to take decisions and make recommendations. The Directions are also now more in line with the Probation Service National Standards on licence enforcement and reflect that the aim of licence enforcement should be not only to reduce the risk of further offending, but also to make clear that the licence period is an integral part of the sentence and compliance with licence conditions is an important part of licence supervision.

Deportees

Improving the operational and working practices between the Prison Service and IND, which has resulted in a sharp increase in the number of parole notifications issued on target.

Parole Board Organisation

A Review of corporate governance, resulting in tighter terms of reference for management committees. The Board also achieved IiP status and has recently achieved re-accreditation. Members and staff development has become a greater priority for the Board, with systematic training needs analysis and evaluation mechanisms adopted. The Board is also in the process of developing a whole system approach with the Prison Service to implement change and has improved its focus upon communication, both internal and external.

The Parole Process

The Review provided an opportunity to raise the profile of the parole process which was achieved via the 42 area committees of the Criminal Justice Strategy Committees and the National Criminal Justice Consultative Council. A series of Parole Clerk Fora have been introduced to provide for training and topical issues to be discussed. This has given

parole clerks a much-needed voice to highlight areas of "best practice" and these suggestions are being taken forward in order to further improve parole performance. The Review has also led to Victim Personal Statements taken by the police at the time of the offence being included, where available, in parole dossiers. Victims are also generally more informed about the parole process.

Of the 118 recommendations, only 18 remain to be completed. The Review is being project managed by the Early Release and Recall Section of the Sentencing Policy and Penalties Unit of the Home Office, working in conjunction with the Probation Service, Prison Service, Immigration and Nationality Directorate and the Parole Board. Their progress is being monitored by a Programme Board (which is chaired by the Head of the Sentencing Policy and Penalties Unit), in which all the relevant criminal justice agencies are represented. I have decided that the time is right formally to draw the review to a close, although the work on the outstanding recommendations will continue and I will receive regular reports on its progress.

As a part of the Review, the Secretary of State's Directions to the Parole Board concerning the release of determinate sentence prisoners have been reviewed and a revised copy of these Directions has been served upon the Parole Board today. The purpose of the Directions is to structure the Board's discretion and require it to have regard to risk. The balance of the Directions is between public protection and the rehabilitative benefits of early release.

In reviewing the existing Directions, a number of considerations were taken into account.

We were concerned that the voice of the victim, when considering whether or not a determinate sentence prisoner is suitable for early release on parole, needed to be heard. The Victim's Charter and Victim Personal Statements have been in use for some time now, with the latter being a useful vehicle for victims to state how they have been affected by the offence. We were keen to build on this by requiring the Board to consider the impact of the offence upon the victim or the victim's family when assessing suitability for early release on parole.

The existing Directions make no reference to previous record (save in the case of violent and sexual offenders and then only to previous offences of three similar nature). Previous offending (and previous custodial penalties) is the most reliable predictor of future offending, and we were concerned that the new Directions should recognise this.

The existing Directions rightly draw attention to the relevance of previous breaches of trust. However, they fail to include the prisoner's likely compliance with the conditions of his licence, taking into account where there have been breaches of trust in the past and during the course of his present sentence. This omission has been rectified.

The new Directions require the Parole Board to take account of an actuarial risk predictor tool, where such a tool is available.

In conclusion, the new Directions provide a sharper focus on risk assessment and, for the first time, formally recognises the role of victims in the parole process. They will come into force on 1 May 2004.

Copies of the Directions are available in the House Library.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Equal Pay

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Jacqui Smith): I have today published a consultation document on proposals to streamline equal value tribunal cases. Equal pay cases can be notoriously slow and complex, particularly the large-scale cases concerning questions of whether jobs are of equal value. Our proposals to speed up and simplify these cases form part of a package of measures to improve the way in which the Equal Pay Act 1970 works in practice. For example, last year we introduced the Equal Pay Questionnaire and lengthened the time limits for bringing cases and for making arrears payments.

The overall aim of our new proposals is to make the tribunal process work as effectively as possible and to tackle the lengthy delays that can occur in the more complex cases. Key features include: providing the Employment Tribunal Presidents of England and Wales, and of Scotland with the power to appoint tribunals with a specialist knowledge of equal value cases; promoting firmer case management, for example, through providing standard directions to ensure early exchange of information; streamlining complex rules of procedure; and ensuring more effective use of independent experts. The new provisions dovetail with the proposed new Employment Tribunal Regulations and Rules of Procedure. The intention is that, subject to Parliamentary approval, these measures should come into effect on 1 October 2004.

The consultation document will be placed on the DTI and Women and Equality Unit websites so that it is available to the wider public. The consultation period will run for 12 weeks, with a closing date for comments of 10 June 2004. Copies of the consultation document have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Taxis/Private Hire Vehicles

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): We welcomed the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) report that was published on 11 November. It provides a useful analysis of the market impact of taxi regulations. The OFT made a number of recommendations to Government, aimed at improving services for consumers. The Government is committed to delivering better transport services and has carefully considered OFT's contribution to the debate. Taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) have an important role to play in the provision of public transport, especially when buses or trains are not available. As well as providing the connecting first or last trips of a journey, making it easier to use public transport, they can provide people in the lowest income groups with access to vital services and enhanced quality of life.

We strongly support the OFT's role in conducting analyses of this kind. They are useful in considering the economic effects of Government regulations.

That is why we have empowered the OFT and other economic regulators under the Enterprise Act 2002 to advise where laws and regulations may create barriers to entry and competition or channel markets in a particular direction, thereby holding back innovation and progress. The Government broadly accepted the conclusions of similar OFT and Competition

Commission investigations into the markets for pharmacies, private dentistry and prescription-only veterinary medicines.

In considering OFT's recommendations on taxis, the Government have consulted stakeholders and taken into account the many representations received. The Government has also taken into account the reports of the Transport Select Committee.

I attach below the Government's action plan responding to OFT's recommendations. This action plan relates to England and Wales. Legislation regarding the taxi market is devolved in Scotland and Northern Ireland and they have responded separately.

Restrictions on the numbers of taxis

In England and Wales outside London, local authorities (district/borough councils or unitary authorities) have been able to restrict the number of taxi licences that they issue since at least 1847. In practice, some 45 per cent. of authorities do so at present, but the legislation allows them to control numbers only if they are satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand.

Local authorities with quantity restrictions must be able to justify their policy in the event of an appeal by a taxi licence applicant who has had his application refused on the grounds of quantity controls. The usual method of ascertaining the level of demand is by means of a survey. The legislation does not stipulate any specific frequency for the surveys, but any licensing authority that controlled taxi numbers would want to ensure that its policy was based on up-to-date and sound information.

The OFT recommended that local authorities should not retain this power because they considered that such restrictions can:

reduce the availability of taxis

increase waiting times for consumers

reduce choice and safety for consumers

restrict those wanting to set up a taxi business.

The Government agree that consumers should enjoy the benefits of competition in the taxi market and considers that it is detrimental to those seeking entry to a market if it is restricted. The Government are therefore strongly encouraging all those local authorities who still maintain quantity restrictions to remove restrictions as soon as possible. Restrictions should be retained only if there is a strong justification that removal of the restrictions would lead to significant consumer detriment as a result of local conditions.

However, the Government received a significant number of representations expressing the view that ultimately local authorities remain best placed to determine local transport needs and to make the decisions about them in the light of local circumstances. The Government believe that local authorities should be given the opportunity to assess their own needs, in the light of the OFT findings, rather than moving to a legislative solution.

Nevertheless the Government believe that local authorities should publish and justify their reasons for restricting the number of taxi licences issued. The Government will therefore write shortly to each district/borough council or unitary authority maintaining quantity restrictions and ask them to review by 31 March 2005 the local case for such restrictions, and at least every three years thereafter, and make their conclusions available to the public.

The Government intend that the letter will include guidelines on quantity restrictions, including a review of the level of service available to consumers and consumer choice. The guidelines will cover:

effective surveys to measure demand, including latent demand, for taxi services;

consultation with:

all those working in the market;

consumer and passenger (including disabled) groups;

groups which represent those passengers with special needs;

the police;

a wide range of transport stakeholders e.g. rail/bus/coach providers and traffic managers.

publication of conclusions. This will include an explanation of the particular local circumstances that justify restrictions, what benefits they deliver to consumers and how decisions on numbers have been reached. Authorities will be encouraged to make all the evidence gathered to support the decision-making process available for public scrutiny.

This is to ensure that decisions to impose restrictions are based upon strong up-to-date evidence of benefits to consumers locally for their retention, and that the decision-making process is transparent and consultative. The Government consider that this would help local authorities with quantity restrictions to justify their policy if they were challenged about refusing to issue a taxi licence in the courts. If restrictions are not shown to be delivering clear benefits to consumers, it is the view of Government that local authorities should remove them.

The Government will review in association with the OFT the extent of quantity controls in three years' time to monitor progress towards the lifting of controls. If necessary, the Government will then explore further options through the RRO or legislative process if insufficient progress has been made.

The Local Transport Plan process requires local transport authorities to look holistically at how the transport provision for their area contributes to wider objectives such as economic growth, accessibility and the environment. Taxis and private hire vehicles are an integral part of local transport provision and should be properly taken into account in this process. The Government intends that the next five-year Local Transport Plans, due to be submitted by authorities in 2005, will include justification of any quantity restrictions in the wider local transport context[1].

[1] Those few authorities that will not be required to produce a Local Transport Plan will still be expected to justify their quantity restriction policy if any of the districts in their area have such restrictions.

The Government will also include guidelines on quantity restrictions in its best practice guidance on taxi licensing.

Maintaining quality in service provision

The OFT states that there is a strong case for regulating quality and safety both for taxis and PHVs as:

consumers cannot judge certain standards when getting into a taxi or PHV; and

taxi services can have a role to play in broader social welfare policy.

The OFT concludes that quality and safety standards should be maintained and supported by effective enforcement. The Government agree.

The OFT recognises that local authorities should be able to apply quality and safety regulations to suit their needs. In doing this, local authorities should ensure that any quality and safety specifications set do not go beyond what is required to achieve their policy aim. To help them, OFT recommended that the Department for Transport promote and disseminate local best practice in applying quality and safety regulations.

The Government agree with OFT that quality standards have an important role to play in securing the safety of the travelling public and ensuring that they are provided with a high level of service. The Government also agree that these decisions should continue to be made by local authorities, but considers that there is scope for more sharing of best practice, particularly in ensuring proportionality.

The Government will therefore consult local authorities and other stakeholders in order to develop and publish best practice guidance as OFT recommend. The Government intend that this will comprehensively cover licensing issues, including suitable criteria for licensed vehicles, drivers and PHV operators; driver training; safety; security and other topical issues. The draft guidance will also include sections on quantity controls; fares (see below); enforcement; taxi zones; flexible transport services; and a model taxi/PHV policy for the Local Transport Plan process.

The aim would be to consult on draft guidance later this year, with a view to publication by the end of the year.

Fares

The OFT recommends that local authorities should not set fixed or minimum fares. They should only set taxi fare tariffs which represent the maximum that can be charged:

to protect vulnerable consumers;

to address a lack of price competition; and

to allow consumers to negotiate lower fares in certain situations.

The Government agree that where taxi fares are set by local authorities they should be a maximum. As the OFT notes, this is already the case in England and Wales outside London. The Government agree that the situation in London should be clarified and is therefore grateful that the licensing authority for London has agreed to make clear through secondary measures that fares set in London are a maximum rather than mandatory as soon as it is feasible to do so.

The Government also note OFT's advice that consumers should be encouraged to negotiate for lower fares, particularly when booking taxi services over the telephone. In promoting more competition in the market, the Government will ask the OFT to advise on guidance as part of the Government's best practice guidance for local authorities (which will also encompass best practice on quality and quantity controls including unmet demand surveys as outlined above). The guidance will make clear that initiatives to promote greater competition should not jeopardise the safety of consumers or drivers, or create enforcement issues. There is scope to encourage some firms to differentiate their services thereby providing a greater range of choice for consumers (for example by providing a "happy hour" of lower cost journeys for, say, pensioners).

Further issues

The OFT also commented on several further issues that concern taxi and PHV licensing but which are outside the remit of the report:

Regulatory Reform Action Plan

The Government's Regulatory Reform Action Plan published in 2002 contained a number of proposals to use the streamlined order-making procedure in the Regulatory Reform Act 2001 to amend burdensome primary legislation. The plan included four proposals for taxi and PHV legislation in England and Wales outside London, which were subject to Ministerial decision. These were:

removing the requirement for Secretary of State approval of local authority resolutions to amalgamate taxi zones;

standardising driver and operator licence duration;

removing local authority powers to restrict taxi licence numbers in their area; and

clarifying/simplifying the position on PHV cross border hirings across the borders of different licensing authorities.

The OFT considered that these proposals represented areas of concern and recommended that they should be addressed. The issue of restrictions of taxi licences is covered earlier in this action plan. The Government are taking forward the repeal of the need for the Secretary of State to approve taxi zone amalgamation resolutions in the regulatory reform order that will repeal various local authority consent regimes. The Government will include the issues of driver and operator licence duration and cross border hirings of PHVs (and taxis) for consultation in the draft best practice guidance.

Taxi Licensing Zones

The OFT considers that where taxi licensing areas are divided into more than one zone, greater clarity would be brought to the market if local authorities removed the zones and established a single licensing area. The Government agree and will include a statement to this effect in the draft best practice guidance.

Cottam Power Station

The Minister for Energy, E-Commerce and Postal Services (Mr. Stephen Timms): I have today granted consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to EDF Energy (Cottam Power) Limited for the construction of flue gas desulphurisation plant at the 2,000 MW coal-fired power station at Cottam in Nottinghamshire. Planning permission for the plant has also been deemed to be granted, subject to 54 planning conditions agreed with the Nottinghamshire County Council and the Bassetlaw District Council.

The consent is for the final two units with the first two already obtaining consent in August 2002 and which are currently under construction.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Budget Statement

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Mr. Charles Clarke): In his Budget statement yesterday, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer set out measures to ensure stability for education, children's services and skills and the continued progress across the Department's agenda that is crucial to the economic and social well-being of the country.

Education expenditure in England will grow by an average of 4.4 per cent. across the Spending Review period: that is by 6.0 per cent. in 2005–06; 3.6 per cent. in 2006–07 and 3.5 per cent. in 2007–08. The tables below show the plans for the Department's Expenditure Limit and local authority provision for education and children's social services; and plans for total education spending in England over the Spending Review period.

£million	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Departmental Expenditure Limit	31,105	32,905	35,153
Local Authority Formula Spending Share Education	27,963	29,863	31,663
Children's FSS	4,016	4,316	4,516

£million	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Total Education Spending (England)	56,529	60,122	63,910

As a result of this settlement, education spending in the UK will be 5.6 per cent. of GDP in 2007–08, up from 5.4 per cent. in 2004–05.

In every area, investment will be accompanied by reform.

Children

Over 1.6 million children have benefited from free part time nursery education for three and four year olds; and 400,000 children and their families in deprived area have been helped by 524 Sure Start centres.

As a result of this settlement, the number of children's centres will rise to 1,700 by 2008, covering all 20 per cent. of the country's most disadvantaged wards. We will also announce in due course an expansion of childcare places, family support services, and an expansion of extended schools, which bring together education, health, children's social services and childcare.

This settlement will provide the funding necessary to address the agenda set out in the "Every Child Matters: The Next Steps", including the establishment of Children's Trusts to develop in each locality integrated services for children and families and improved care and life chances for children in care.

Schools

As a result of the Government's class size pledge, 350,000 five, six and seven year olds are no longer in classes of 31 or more. There are around 25,000 more teachers and 80,000 more support staff than in 1997. In 1997, half of all 11 year olds went to secondary school unable to read, write and count well. Now it is a quarter. And the international PIRLS study in March 2003 showed that our 10 year olds are the third best readers in the world. This settlement will enable primary schools and teachers to continue to raise standards of literacy and numeracy supported by workforce reform and the recruitment of more teaching assistants.

In 1997, just 45.1 per cent. of pupils got five good grades at GCSE. Last year it was 52.9 per cent. And it is rising fastest in our toughest area—pupils in Excellence in Cities areas are improving at more than twice the rate of pupil everywhere else.

Half of all secondary pupils are now taught in specialist schools—there were just 257 specialist schools in 1997. And they are getting better results—56.7 per cent. of pupils in specialist schools get five good grades at GCSE. This settlement will continue the drive to achieve excellence and to narrow the gaps in attainment between schools and between pupils within individual schools. It will make a reality of our commitment that every school that meets the standard will have the opportunity to gain specialist status; and will allow a continued expansion in the number of academies.

The resources will also enable us to respond to the recommendations of the Tomlinson report, including ensuring that education equips young people for the world of work.

Over the spending review period total Departmental capital spending will rise from £3.85 billion in 2004–05 to £6.78 billion in 2007–08. This will ensure that, through our Building Schools for the Future programme, by 2015 every secondary school can be refurbished or rebuilt with world class technology in every school and the best state of the art learning in every classroom.

Accompanying this new investment, we will develop a new relationship with schools to help deliver personalised learning tailored to the talents and needs of every pupil, underpinned by a strengthened accountability framework, a simplified school improvement process and improved information and data management.

Higher Education

Publicly planned funding for higher education has risen dramatically under this government. Expenditure on science and research will have increased in 2005–06 by £1.25 billion a year compared to 2002–03—around 30 per cent. in real terms.

The settlement will allow investment in the sector to continue to grow in real terms. It will enable the Government to advance progress towards its target for 50 per cent. participation in higher education and at the same time maintain real terms student funding per head. It will provide the resources needed to deliver the reforms set out in our White Paper "The Future of Higher Education": improving and rewarding excellent teaching; increasing investment in science and research; enabling more people to enter higher education; and supporting those from disadvantaged backgrounds by restoring a grant worth up to £2,700 in 2006, and abolishing up-front tuition fees for all students.

Lifelong learning

In December 2003, 255,000 young people were studying Modern Apprenticeships, compared with just 75,800 in 1997. The number of working age people in England with no qualifications in 1985 was 10.5 million. In 2003 it was 4.6 million. Between 2001 and 2002 over 300,000 adults were helped to raise their numeracy and literacy skills.

The settlement will provide for new measures—through the New Deal for Skills—to tackle the UK's large number of adults with low skills in the workforce. It will offer, in job centres, for the employed and well as unemployed, a one-stop skills service with access to personal skills advisers and training. By 2007 1.5 million adults will have improved their basic skills as part of our longer term aim of ensuring that by 2010 that the number of adults in the workforce who lack NVQ2 or equivalent qualifications is reduced by at least 40 per cent.

We will take forward the measures set out in our Skills Strategy to meet the needs of employers, employees and individual learners; including a key role for the new Sector Skills Councils.

Efficiency

The front-line will also see resources freed up and cost pressures reduced through efficiency gains worth at least 2.5 per cent. each year over the Spending Review period. These will be delivered through reducing administration costs, reforming procurement and unlocking productivity gains from technology and workforce improvements. For example:

There will be a 31 per cent. reduction in Department for Education and Skills headquarters staff by 2008—1,460 fewer staff.

On procurement, we will take a more pro-active role to help schools and colleges achieve savings through collaboration and wider agreements—the recent agreement with Microsoft which reduces the cost of software to schools by £46 million over three years shows what is possible.

We will work with our partners in children's services, education and training to ensure that resources—people and money—can be used as effectively as possible, for example through reduced bureaucracy and workforce reform.

The Government's aim is to achieve excellence in standards of education and levels of skills, and to give everyone the opportunity to develop their learning. This settlement provides the necessary resources to support and deliver these objectives.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 22 March 2004

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Fine Enforcement

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): Improving fine enforcement performance is an important part of maintaining public confidence in the criminal justice system. Justice must be done, and must be seen to be done.

To this end, we are launching a national initiative to target those who have defaulted on criminal penalties imposed by the courts. The initiative, called Operation Payback, will see magistrates courts across England and Wales conducting "blitzes" against serious fines defaulters in their areas.

The operation means that money owed to the court, and therefore the taxpayer, and compensation owed to victims, is collected. The Government is sending a clear message to those who have been fined that payment is not optional and that penalties must be paid.

The national operation is being co-ordinated by the Department for Constitutional Affairs with support from the Police and the Department for Work and Pensions.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Radioactive Waste Management

The Minister for the Environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): With the establishment of the new Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) during the course of 2003, UK Government and the devolved Administrations in Scotland and Wales have been reviewing the future of the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee (RWMAC). This is as we said we would do in the September 2001 "Managing Radioactive Waste Safely" consultation document.

In light of this review, we have concluded that RWMAC should be put into abeyance for the two to three year period during which CoRWM will be compiling its recommendations on future policy for the long-term management of the UK's higher activity radioactive wastes. At the end of this period we shall carry out a further review of Government advisory machinery needs in the radioactive waste management policy area.

This has not been an easy decision to take given the quality of the past advice we have received from RWMAC. But the key factors that have swayed my colleagues and me in arriving at this decision are:

- we believe that in principle it would be wrong for Government to have two "independent" advisory committees operating in the radioactive waste management policy area;
- we believe this could create problems of perception of the respective roles and requirements of the two Committees;
- we are fully committed to the CoRWM process and the need to drive this forward over the next two to three years, to arrive at a decision on how best to manage the UK's higher activity radioactive wastes;
- the resources available to us must be focussed on this task.

During the course of our review work, we did receive a proposal from the committee for a reconfigured and slimmed down form of RWMAC operation. We considered this very carefully, but it did not solve the basic problem of having two independent advisory committees operating in the same policy area. And we felt that this could have potentially led to a lesser degree and standard of advice than we, and potentially the Committee itself, have come to expect.

We recognise that needs for review and advice could arise during the period that CoRWM is conducting work and RWMAC is in abeyance. Our proposal, for the period of CoRWM's work, is to consider and address these in a case by case manner through our Radioactive Waste Policy Group (RWPG). This is a Group made up of UK Government, devolved Administration and regulatory body representatives that meets regularly, several times a year, to discuss radioactive waste management policy and regulatory issues. The Group has the remit to carry out reviews, calling on external advice, as necessary.

I have written to the current RWMAC Chairman and his Committee members to inform them of this decision and to thank them for the hard effort, and sound advice, that they have provided in recent years. This advice will remain available for scrutiny and use on the Committee's website www.defra.gov.uk/rwmac/.

DEFENCE

Disturbances (Kosovo)

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): Last week saw a deterioration of the security situation in Kosovo. Violence broke out between ethnic Serbs and Albanians in Mitrovica in northern Kosovo, which subsequently spread to other ethnic Serb populated areas in Kosovo. The violence has resulted in deaths within both communities, as well as hundreds injured, including some KFOR troops. The situation in Kosovo although still tense, now appears calmer.

The troops already in Kosovo were heavily committed in dealing with the situation. Commander KFOR therefore took the decision to authorise the deployment of his in-theatre tactical reserves to assist with the situation. NATO also issued instructions to reinforce KFOR with additional SFOR troops from Bosnia, including a UK company of 1st Royal Gurkha Rifles, a US company and a company from the Italian Multinational Support Unit (Carabineri).

In the early hours of Thursday 18 March, NATO called upon the Operational Reserve Force (ORF) Ready Battalion. The ready battalion role is one that the UK has responsibility for during the first six months of 2004. This means that, as part of our overall commitment to the Balkans, the UK provides NATO with a battalion that could, in circumstances such as these, be rapidly deployed into either Bosnia or Kosovo. The lead elements of the ORF, totalling approximately 150 men and 12 Land Rovers, departed from RAF Brize Norton on Thursday afternoon and landed in Kosovo late that evening. The vast majority of the ORF battalion of around 660 men has now deployed. 1st Battalion The Royal Gloucestershire Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment is providing the core of the battalion group.

There are now around 1,100 UK armed forces personnel deployed in Kosovo.

The purpose of this deployment is to restore calm to the province and prevent unrest spreading to areas outside Kosovo, the type of task for which the Operational Reserve was designed. UK troops will conduct routine patrolling, the guarding of sites (such as the UN Mission) and public order duties, as tasked by Commander KFOR.

Further to the deployment of the UK battalion, NATO has requested that an element of the NATO Strategic Reserve Force, provided by a French battalion, also be deployed to Kosovo. NATO has also requested the deployment of the three standby battalions that make up the full Operational Reserve Force. These battalions are provided by the US, Germany and Italy. The German battalion has been deployed to Skopje, Macedonia, in the first instance.

It is for NATO to determine how long reserves will be required, but in terms of an initial estimate, and with the situation changing, we believe a sensible course of action is to plan initially for a deployment period of approximately 30 days.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

"Tackling Social Exclusion"

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Yvette Cooper): Today I am launching a discussion document entitled "Tackling Social Exclusion: Taking Stock and Looking to the Future". The document is part of a programme of work being undertaken by the Social Exclusion Unit aiming to provide a clearer understanding of how Government policies have worked together to tackle social exclusion and identify future priorities. It aims to seek views and further evidence from a wide range of experts and stakeholders on the material presented.

The material within the discussion document will be used to stimulate discussion at a seminar for key stakeholders today. Written comments or feedback are invited by 18 April 2004. Copies of the discussion document are available at http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/ and in the Libraries of the House.

Draft Regional Transport Strategy (South-east)

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister is today publishing for public consultation proposed changes to the draft regional transport strategy (RTS) for the south-east. They follow the public examination into the draft RTS in July 2003 and the panel report in October 2003.

RTS's are an integral part of regional planning guidance (RPG) and the draft RTS for the south-east represents a revision to RPG9, as published in March 2001. On commencement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill the RTS will be part of a statutory regional spatial strategy (RSS).

Other partial reviews of RPG9 are at various stages in the process. In particular, a public examination into the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-regional strategy is imminent, and the Secretary of State's proposed changes for the Ashford growth area will shortly be published.

The RTS aims to achieve a transport system that progressively reaches the standards of the best in north-west Europe, by promoting management of and investment in the system; rebalancing the structure and use of the transport system in favour of more sustainable modes; and supporting the regional spatial strategy, particularly managing and investing in interregional corridors and delivering urban renaissance and sub-regional objectives. This approach should also inform local authorities and other agencies in preparing relevant regional and local strategies.

Overall the panel considered the draft RTS to be broadly compatible with RPG9, with commendably focused policies. The panel did, however, recommend many changes. Aspects of the strategy which the panel proposed changes to include the selection of strategic corridors (the regional frame), the ranking of priority projects in the investment frameworks, car parking standards, community and demand based transport, and walking and cycling.

The panel supported the identification and development of regional transport hubs and connecting spokes as a core plank in the strategy. In place of the regional frame the panel identified the region's more important international gateways and inter-regional movement corridors. Alongside measures to facilitate urban renewal these elements were viewed as priorities for investment to deliver the spatial strategy.

Government support these aims, and are grateful for the recommendations of the panel. However, one change to the panel's recommendations is necessary to ensure the strategy and its components are more coherently focused and provide transparent direction for the future development of the regional strategy.

A key issue for the region is the treatment of priorities. The panel proposed a priority list of 15 schemes, made up of nine heavy rail, one light rail, two bus and three road schemes. While we view establishing regional priorities as a key element in a future RTS, we were unconvinced that the panel identified the most important regional priorities.

More specifically, the criteria used to identify priorities and the way in which the criteria were applied did not fully reflect the draft Government guidance,

which was published after the examination concluded. Furthermore, the application of the criteria was not transparent and resulted in a priority list that was largely focused on a single mode and failed to identify affordability issues.

The process of comprehensively reviewing RPG9 has already begun. As part of this work the regional assembly (RA) is intent on improving the evidence base by developing a robust approach to prioritisation, an activity that I am particularly keen to see progress on.

I have today written to the RA with the proposed changes indicating areas where views are particularly sought from interested parties. There will now be a public consultation period on the proposed changes, which will end on 21st May.

Copies of the relevant documents are available in the Libraries of both Houses and have been provided for all of the region's MPs, MEPs and local authorities.

TREASURY

Finance Bill

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): As I announced in the debate on the Budget resolutions on 18 March, *Official Report*, column 538, the Government intend to publish the Finance Bill on Thursday 8 April. Explanatory notes on the Bill's clauses will be available in the Vote Office and the Libraries of both Houses on that day. Members of the public will be able to obtain copies of the explanatory notes from the Treasury. These will also be available on the Treasury's website http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/.

HEALTH

Health Services for Prisoners

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): I am making this statement with the Minister with responsibility for correctional services and reducing reoffending, my hon. Friend the Member for Wythenshawe and Sale, East (Paul Goggins).

The prison population demonstrates high levels of morbidity, particularly in areas such as mental health and substance misuse. Historically, primary health care services to prisoners have been secured and delivered by the Prison Service independently of the NHS.

A formal partnership between the Prison Service and the NHS was launched in 2000 to modernise health services for prisoners. In 2002, the Government announced their intention to move this partnership on to a new phase, with the Department of Heath assuming overall financial responsibility for these services from April 2003 and the transfer of full commissioning responsibility for prison health services to NHS PCTs by April 2006. A Development Network of prisons and PCTs was established to provide a test-bed for this transfer at operational level.

We are today announcing the NHS Primary Care Trusts that will assume responsibility for commissioning primary healthcare services in their local prisons from April 2004. This is the initial phase of transfer of responsibility and involves 22 PCTs that have prisons within their boundaries. Of these 22, four have delegated commissioning responsibility to neighbouring PCTs, giving 18 PCTs the lead for local prison health partnerships.

Covering 34 prisons across England, the 18 lead Primary Care Trusts have demonstrated a clear understanding of the health needs of their local prison populations and have, in partnership with the prisons themselves, developed robust plans to improve health services for those populations. Funding for primary health services that was previously allocated through the Prison Service will be transferred to the relevant Primary Care Trusts from April 2004. Funding for NHS secondary care services provided to prisoners is already within the financial baselines of PCTs. Investment in health services for prisoners is set to increase by over £40 million a year over the three year period to March 2006. Responsibility for commissioning health services in all publicly run prisons in England will transfer to local Primary Care Trusts by 1 April 2006.

The 18 partnerships where commissioning responsibility will transfer from 1 April are:

PCT	*Prisons*
Castlepoint and Rochford	Bullwood Hall
Doncaster East	Lindholme Moorland
Durham and Chester-le Street	Frankland Durham Low Newton
Exeter	Channings Wood [1] Dartmoor [2] Exeter
Heart of Birmingham	Birmingham
Hounslow	Feltham
Huntingdon	Littlehey
Islington	Holloway Pentonville
Lambeth	Brixton
Leeds West	Leeds
North Liverpool	Liverpool
Northumberland	Acklington Castington
Reading	Reading
Richmond and Twickenham	Latchmere House
South West Dorset	Dorchester Guys Marsh [3] Portland Shepton Mallet [4] The Verne Weare
Suffolk Coast	Hollesley Bay Warren Hill
Swale	Elmley Standford Hill Swaleside
West Lincolnshire	Lincoln Morton Hall

[1] Managed by Exeter on behalf of Teignbridge PCT

[2] Managed by Exeter on behalf of South Hams and West Devon PCT

[3] Managed by SW Dorset on behalf of North Dorset PCT

[4] Managed by SW Dorsest on behalf of Mendip PCT

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 23 March 2004

DEFENCE

Principal Service Museums

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): The business process review of the six principal service museums has been completed. The review confirmed the value of the museums and recommended their continued support by the MOD. The review also recommended a number of measures to improve communication between the museums and their relevant sponsor branch, to provide assurance of value for money and to facilitate longer term planning. These will be taken forward by the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (personnel) in conjunction with the three service sponsor branches.

Estate Rationalisation (Presentation Strategy)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): The 2003 defence estate stewardship report is published today. This report outlines the continuing progress that the Ministry of Defence is making in implementing the estate strategy that was launched in 2000.

The Ministry of Defence is continually examining ways of improving military capability and value for money for the taxpayer. As part of this approach, we want to keep the size and location of our bases under review. Building on initial work that has been done to identify the MOD's core sites, the Department is now undertaking further work to examine where estate rationalisation may be possible. This work is consistent with the Department's contribution to the Government's independent review of public sector rationalisation—the "Lyons Review".

The work now underway is looking at consolidating defence activity at a smaller number of more densely utilised locations in order to achieve the optimum use of land and facilities. This on-going review will necessarily involve the examination of a number of proposals for the potential collocation and relocation of units. It will also take into account existing relocation studies that have already been announced. It is important to recognise that any options that are considered will need to meet operational requirements as well as representing value for money.

The Department is currently at an early stage of this wider review and each proposal that emerges from this work will be subject to full consultation in the normal way. This consultation is essential to determine whether the options under consideration are viable in the widest sense, for instance, in relation to transport, education, health and the future use of potential surplus MOD sites.

No decisions have yet been reached on any site, but as this matter progresses I will ensure that right hon. and hon. Members are advised of progress where such an issue may affect their constituency.

A copy of the report is in the Library of the House.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Licensing Act 2003

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): I am today laying before Parliament a draft of the guidance to be issued by me under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003. I am also placing copies in the Libraries of both Houses, the Vote Office, and the Printed Paper Office. Copies will be made available to the public on the DCMS website at:

http://www.culture.gov.uk/alcohol_and_entertainment/licensing_act_2003.

The guidance makes clear our determination to enable licensing authorities and the police to bring the minority of badly run premises into line with the best. The police and other responsible authorities should make full use of existing, and new powers under the Act, proactively tackling alcohol-related crime and disorder and badly run premises.

In carrying out their functions under the Act, licensing authorities have a clear responsibility to promote the prevention of crime and disorder, and the prevention of public nuisance, as well as promote public safety, and protect children from harm.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): On 15 December I issued a statement noting that I had received significant representations from organisations representing housebuilders and other major developers indicating their concerns about the potential removal from planning legislation of outline planning permission and its effect on proposed developments. I said that I would consider further the removal of the provision from the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill that abolishes outline planning permission.

My statement said that if outline planning permission were to be retained this could only be on the basis that it provided the opportunity for greater community involvement and a level of information which will enable local authorities to assess all the significant environmental impacts. I indicated my willingness to consider proposals on the scope and extent of the further information needed to achieve these objectives.

Discussions have been held with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and representatives of developers. We have received letters from the British Property Federation (BPF) and the House Builders Federation (HBF) indicating their willingness for their members to provide sufficient information with applications for outline planning permission to satisfy our objectives. The information would meet the requirements of environmental impact assessments and would comprise elements to be included

in a design statement. These elements would be massing, layout, relationship to public space, density (as defined by units for residential developments or floorspace for commercial developments), building heights, access and movements, landscape strategy, mix of use and response to context. The level of information provided would be appropriate to the complexity of the scheme. We see this information as providing the foundation for greater community involvement.

Following the discussions with developers and the receipt of the letters from the BPF and the HBF I am pleased to announce that the Government are now prepared to retain outline planning permission as part of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. We will table an amendment to achieve this for consideration on 25 March during third reading in the House of Lords of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill.

We propose to use the standard application form proposed in the Bill as the means for the submission of the additional information to be required to accompany an application for outline planning permission. The details would be set out in secondary legislation, in an amendment to the General Permitted Development Order and in guidance accompanying the standard application form. We aim to consult on this package in June.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 24 March 2004

CABINET OFFICE

Central Office of Information Targets 2003–04

The Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Douglas Alexander): The targets set for the Central Office of Information for the 2003–04 financial year are:

Financial: To break even on an accruals basis.

Efficiency: To achieve a unit cost reduction of 2.5 per cent.

Quality: For the customer satisfaction system:

To achieve a customer satisfaction score of 8.25 out of 10;

To achieve 96 per cent. of customer satisfaction scores of 6 or higher;

To achieve a response rate of 62 per cent.

HEALTH

Dental Treatment Charges

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): The written ministerial statement of 12 February 2004 covering national health service charges in England informed the House that we planned to raise the maximum patient charge for a course of dental treatment from £372 to £378 from 1 April 2004.

In order to minimise changes and to avoid any confusion for patients, dentists and their practice staff, we are deferring the increase in the maximum charge for a course of dental treatment from 1 April to 1 May 2004 so as to coincide with the implementation of the doctors and dentists review body recommendation for dentists' fees. The fees will be backdated to 1 April 2004 but the new charges will be effective from 1 May 2004 and there will be no retrospective increases to charges already paid by patients.

The chief dental officer will be writing to all dentists advising them of the 1 May 2004 implementation date for the statement of dental remuneration and the increase in the maximum charge for a course of dental treatment.

DEFENCE

Gulf Veterans' Illnesses

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): A key principle of the Government's approach to addressing the health concerns of veterans of the 1990–91 Gulf conflict is that there should be appropriate research into veterans' illnesses and factors that may have a bearing on these. Our current research programme is expected to cost at least £8.5 million.

As part of this research effort, the Ministry of Defence funded an independent study of the reproductive health of UK veterans of the 1990–91 Gulf conflict through the Medical Research Council (MRC). The main findings of this research have today been published in a paper entitled: "Miscarriage, stillbirth and congenital malformation in the offspring of UK veterans of the first Gulf war" in the "*International Journal of Epidemiology*".

The researchers have reported that for male veterans of the 1990–1991 Gulf conflict, they found no evidence for increased risk of stillbirth, chromosomal malformations, or congenital syndromes. Some associations were reported between fathers' service and increased risk of miscarriage and other less well-defined malformations. For female veterans, the number of stillbirths and malformations were too small to allow meaningful analysis and there was no effect on the risk of miscarriage.

The MOD welcomes publication of this important research. The MRC's military health research advisory group (MHRAG) has considered the paper. They agree with the researchers that overall, the lack of evidence to link reproductive health problems with Gulf service should be reassuring to veterans and that the apparent increased risk identified should be interpreted with caution. The MHRAG does not intend to recommend any additional research into this aspect of Gulf veterans' health at this time.

TREASURY

The UK/IMF (Annual Report)

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): I am today publishing the fifth annual report to Parliament on UK operations at the IMF, "*Growth For All—Towards a Stable and Fairer World: the UK and the IMF 2003*".

Copies are available in the Library of the House.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

E-diplomacy

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): In our last information and communications technology (ICT) strategy published in 2000 we set ourselves the goal of transforming the FCO from a headquarters with outstations to a single global online organisation. We have come a long way towards achieving that goal. The FCO telecommunications network (FTN) together with our desktop system (Firecrest) provides a dedicated global network that connects our UK offices with over 200 overseas Posts and to the rest of Whitehall. On it we send over 1 million e-mails and download gigabytes of data every day, and run a number of applications including Genie (for issuing passports).

Following publication of the FCO strategy in December last year, we have reviewed what we need from our ICT to enable the more flexible FCO envisaged in that strategy. *"e-diplomacy"* explains how we will introduce greater flexibility to our ICT infrastructure and enable more flexible use of information. This includes more use of mobile and remote-working technology and new applications to make information more accessible, whilst keeping it secure. We will continue to improve our project management skills and develop closer working partnerships with the private sector to ensure we provide the most cost-effective service to FCO users. We will also work with other Government Departments to achieve efficiency savings wherever possible.

The plans we have set out in *"e-diplomacy"* are challenging but achievable. We believe they are crucial to the overall effectiveness of the FCO.

Copies of *"e-diplomacy"* have been placed in the Library of the House. It is also available on the FCO's web-site www.fco.gov.uk.

WALES

Public Audit (Wales) Bill

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Don Touhig): Clause 54 was included in the Public Audit (Wales) Bill to ensure consistency in the criminal law across England and Wales. The Government have brought forward an amendment to Clause 54 to make clear the link with the present legislation that currently applies across England and Wales—section 49 of the Audit Commission Act 1998. It also ensures that any relaxation of the restrictions in the Audit Commission Act can be applied at the same time in England and Wales, following consultation with the National Assembly for Wales of course.

The Government acknowledge the concerns that have been raised about this clause. Indeed, section 49 of the Audit Commission Act is already being considered as part of a much wider review of statutory restrictions on disclosure that the Government are undertaking. This is the Department for Constitutional Affairs' review into existing statutory prohibitions on disclosure. Such restrictions can be removed by order under section 75 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in the case of Acts passed before or in the same session as that Act. The DCA's *"Second Report to Parliament on the Review of Legislation Governing the Disclosure of Information"* published in November 2002 is available at http://www.dca.gov.uk/foi/foidoirpt2.htm. Section 49 of the Audit Commission Act is specifically referred to in Part II of that report, *"Listing by Lead Department"* under the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister heading.

Following preliminary consideration and consultation, the Government's preferred treatment for section 49 is to amend it so that it is consistent with the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act, which has an overall presumption in favour of disclosure. The Department for Constitutional Affairs currently plans to publish a final report on its review in the autumn. The Department for Constitutional Affairs is also intending to bring forward the first order to be made under the freedom of information legislation later this year, and the Government will include the proposed amendment to section 49 in that order. When section 49 is amended, the Government amendment to clause 54 will allow the relaxation of the restriction on disclosure to apply also in Wales. The Government are therefore following the proper process to address this issue, and are already well advanced in doing this.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 25 March 2004

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Decontamination

The Minister for the Environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): The strategic national guidance for the decontamination of the open environment exposed to chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear substances or material has today been published on the DEFRA website www.defra.gov.uk and the UK resilience website www.ukresilience.info. The guidance may be downloaded from those sites and I am also placing a copy in the Library of the House.

This guidance is designed to help local authorities, and others with responsibilities for protection of the public, to develop practical strategies for cleaning up the open environment in the event of the release of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) substances or materials. It also provides an agreed set of basic recovery principles and a shared understanding of the key issues that may need to be addressed. The guidance was recently finalised and is not a response to any new or recent threat of an incident. It is sensible contingency planning and does not mean there is a further threat from CBRN terrorism. Up till now, guidance to local authorities was published in October 2001 and a revised version in August last year. Strategic national guidance on the decontamination of people was published in February 2003.

The guidance is part of a suite of CBRN documents developed under the CBRN resilience programme and led by the Home Office. It also refers to the Government's active consideration of establishment of a new service to be ready to provide advice and assistance in decontamination and clean-up after a CBRN incident. Further details will be given as soon as practicable.

This guidance will be updated periodically and updates will be available on the DEFRA and UK resilience websites. We welcome feedback on the guidance, which can be sent to cbrnenquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

Fisheries

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report *"Net Benefits: A Sustainable and Profitable Future for UK Fishing"* is published today.

The report concludes that the UK fishing industry can be profitable and sustainable in the long term, provided that it modernises to meet global competition.

The report offers an extremely valuable and detached analysis of the situation in British fishing, which we believe offers the Government, the industry and everyone else with an interest the catalyst for moving forward. The report's broad conclusions are:

> The Government should clearly define its economic, social, environmental and safety goals for the fishing industry and fishing communities.
>
> The aim should be to foster and support a competitive, profitable and sustainable UK fleet.
>
> Compliance with the rules by the UK fishing industry and other member states should be improved.
>
> UK fisheries management should be further modernised and be more decentralised and flexible.
>
> The fishing industry must be more fully incorporated into the broader marine management process, with a balanced set of rights and responsibilities.
>
> We should actively encourage and support progressive regionalisation of EU management under the CFP.
>
> Government policies should recognise and support vulnerable fishing dependent communities.
>
> Fisheries management should play a full and equal role in wider systems of managing the marine environment.

These are underpinned by a large number of more specific recommendations. They all demand a more developed partnership approach with the industry if implementation is to be successful.

The Government welcome publication of the report, supports all the report's broad conclusions and will now explore and discuss the report in depth. It is important that this is a fully inclusive process. Our aim is for the fisheries departments in the UK to work closely in partnership with each other, and in collaboration with the industry and other stakeholders, to work up practicable and deliverable solutions, building on the proposals and recommendations in the report. Defra have already set up a team to take this process forward, which will be consulting actively with stakeholders over the coming months. A strategy, and a timetable for delivering it, will be agreed by the end of 2004.

Landfill

The Minister for the Environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): The landfill directive represents an important step change in the way we dispose of waste. It will encourage waste minimisation and increased levels of recycling and recovery.

The council decision on waste acceptance criteria (WAC), agreed in Council in December 2002, sets out the standards that waste must meet to be accepted at one of the three classes of landfill—hazardous, non-hazardous or inert—prescribed by the landfill directive. It introduces criteria and sets limit values for a number of contaminants, so harmonising another aspect of landfill regulation across Europe. A consultation on how the WAC was to be implemented began on 24 September and closed on 17 December.

Following consultation we have decided that the implementation date for the WAC will be 16 July 2005 with the "interim year" between July 2004–July 2005 being managed using a site specific approach based on loading rates of new wastes, the types of new waste and the types of waste already in the landfill. This site-specific approach will continue post-2005. The option of

opening separate cells in hazardous sites for waste deposited after July 2005, which has been subject to the full WAC, will not be pursued.

The limit values for cadmium and mercury will remain those contained in the Council decision. However, this position will be reviewed two years after implementation following discussions between DEFRA and the Environment Agency to determine whether compliance with the groundwater directive requires adoption of limit values lower than those required by the landfill directive. Furthermore, the Government have decided to extend the ban on disposing gypsum-based wastes with biodegradable wastes to include any high sulphate wastes.

The risk assessment option will be adopted but given the difficulties for the agency in its regulation, the potential for greater environmental risk and the resultant risk of having to store hazardous waste pending agency checks, Government will restrict the option to only individual waste streams destined for specific mono-fill sites. While there will be no initial time limit to this approach, Government reserve the right to re-visit the issue within two years of implementation.

The consultation outcome is available in full on

http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/landfill-regs/index.htm

The Landfill (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations to implement these decisions will be laid before Parliament in April. In addition, we expect the landfill directive interpretive guidance to be available to operators also in April.

The Government recognise that implementation of the landfill directive will have a significant impact on the disposal of hazardous waste. They continue to work with the Environment Agency, waste producers and waste managers to ensure that the transition period is as smooth as possible and that the environment and human health are fully protected.

Albatrosses and Petrels

The Minister for the Environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): The agreement on the conservation of albatrosses and petrels (ACAP) is the key international treaty, concluded under the convention on migratory species, which deals with the conservation of albatrosses and petrels in the southern hemisphere. The UK played a leading role in drawing up the agreement and was amongst the first to sign it, in June 2001. The agreement entered into force on 1 February as a result of ratification by the fifth party, South Africa, in November 2003.

In May 2003 I laid an explanatory memorandum before both Houses of Parliament relating to the ratification of ACAP (Command Paper no 5826) in respect of the UK and the British Antarctic territory.

Some of the legal issues raised by the treaty have required further consideration and analysis and the Government did not in fact proceed to ratification last year. In the meantime I am pleased to say that more UK Overseas territories in the range of the species covered by the Agreement have indicated their wish to be included in the UK's ratification and have ensured that their legislation can meet the agreement's requirements.

The Government recognises the urgent need to ratify this agreement as quickly as possible. We have long indicated our strong commitment to the conservation of these species, which are at serious risk from a range of human influences, and wish to play our full part in international efforts.

I am therefore tabling a revised explanatory memorandum today indicating that we propose to ratify the Agreement, without reservations and without further delay, for the UK and the British Antarctic territory, the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. I intend that the instrument of ratification shall be deposited with the Australian Government on 2 April.

As the Government takes these urgent steps, we are conscious that Parliament will have less time than convention normally allows to consider the revised memorandum. However, we believe this to be a special case on the grounds that the agreement itself has been available to both Houses since May 2003. In fact a number of hon. Members have urged the Government recently to take urgent steps to ratify the agreement in the light of the serious conservation issues it addresses. In these circumstances the Government considers that a shortening of the normal scrutiny period is reasonable.

HEALTH

Standards Agency

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Miss Melanie Johnson): The Food Standards Agency's annual report and accounts 2002–03 were laid before Parliament today.

Copies will be placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Immigration and Nationality Directorate

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Beverley Hughes): I have today placed in the Library several important documents on immigration and asylum matters:

- a report of the investigation by Ken Sutton into how guidance was issued to staff in the Sheffield office of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) on the handling of applications under the European Communities Association Agreements (ECAA);
- a response to the Home Affairs Select Committee report on "Asylum Applications";
- the full text of last year's report of the independent review into the operation of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS).

Investigation of ECAA guidance:

Mr. Sutton's main findings are that:

- two sets of guidance were developed in Sheffield, to reduce the extent of checking of ECAA applications, one set in September/October 2003, the other in January/February 2004;
- the decision to proceed with the new guidance was taken by middle ranking managers in charge of the Sheffield team. It was not cleared with senior officials at IND head office in Croydon or with ministers;

together with the deployment of additional staff, the guidance was intended to clear a backlog of ECAA applications which had built up;

the guidance had nothing to do with attempting to reduce the number of people from EU Accession States who might appear in published statistics after 1 May.

The vast majority of those approved under this guidance were already lawfully in the country. From internal management information, we estimate that around 36,000 decisions in the ECAA category have been made in this financial year of which 29,000 were from people already in the UK.

Mr. Sutton has also referred to the relevance of more general working guidance for staff on the clearance of backlogs of older cases. The volume of applications for extensions of stay means that all Governments at least as far back as the late 1980s, have had to address this problem. Over the years, it has been accepted that making decisions on the basis of the information already available to the caseworker can sometimes be justified as a means of tackling backlogs. This is because long backlogs make immigration controls less effective, as it becomes more difficult to take action against people whose applications have been stuck in the system. They are also unfair to legitimate applicants, most of whom are already in the country legally.

Mr. Sutton has found that managers in Sheffield believed that the approach they took was consistent with general guidance on the clearance of backlogs, but he concludes that it went further in extending the procedure to a broader range of cases including new as well as old cases and that it led staff to going too far in easing the application of the checks.

Mr. Sutton's report shows that mistakes were made. There is no suggestion that these were deliberate or the result of lack of effort. Rather there was an excess of zeal in pursuing the common objective of reducing backlogs. Mr. Sutton's inquiry was not a disciplinary investigation. The Director General of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate has therefore now initiated a disciplinary investigation (with all the safeguards necessary to ensure fairness to members of staff) which will decide what management action is required and whether the management in Sheffield needs further strengthening beyond that already announced.

We are determined to learn from this episode. I have accepted all the recommendations made by Mr. Sutton to address the management and other weaknesses identified in his report. This will make it clear who is responsible for determining caseworking practice, their level in the organisation and the respective roles of Ministers and civil service managers. Staff have a right to expect such clarity and for managers to have a defined measure of authority to manage the business in a sensible way. As part of the follow-up to Mr. Sutton's report and as he has recommended, there will be a major effort to standardise guidance for staff in each operational area, ensure that appropriately senior managers are clearly responsible for authorising that guidance, and lay down clearly the circumstances in which Ministers must be consulted.

I have also instructed the Director General to draw up proposals for an off-line audit and inspection unit, reporting directly to me and the Director General, to undertake inspections of working practices and performance in all parts of IND's business.

It is important that these events should not overshadow the great strides that have been made by IND in recent years, including through the excellent work of caseworking staff in Sheffield. The introduction of charging in August has enabled us to invest in additional general caseworking staff. The number of staff deployed on such work in Croydon and Sheffield has increased by 67 per cent., from 780 at the end of 2002 to around 1,300 now. As a result, we have set and are meeting service standards for charged work under which 70 per cent. of cases are decided within three weeks and virtually all of the rest within 13 weeks. Backlogs are low, and special measures to deal with them are no longer necessary.

There are, however, other areas of IND's business where backlogs remain a problem, including a number of older cases where a decision has been taken, but other issues have been raised by the applicant. I have put in hand a full analysis of the extent of this and steps to be taken to deal with it. Mr. Moxon's actions raised the question of how employees can raise matters of concern within IND. Existing Home Office instructions say concerns should be raised either with the Head of the Department or confidentially with a nominated official outside their line management chain and if still unresolved can be raised with the Civil Service Commissioners. I have ordered these procedures should be re-published to every employee today so they can be clear of the avenues open to them if they are concerned about what they are being asked to do. Separately, the Permanent Secretary is taking steps to strengthen my Private Office to enable it to deal better with the large volume of correspondence it receives which includes around 2,000 e-mails a week.

Response to the Home Affairs Committee report on asylum applications:

Also published today is the Government's response to the Home Affairs Committee's recent report on asylum applications. Here too a history of applications exceeding the capacity to deal with them has been reversed, by reducing intake and investing in extra caseworkers about 2,000 more applications are now being decided each month than are being received. At the end of December 2003 the number of asylum applications awaiting an initial decision had fallen to 24,500, the lowest level for a decade.

This has been achieved by the hard work of IND staff, underpinned by considerable Government investment and clear political leadership. As a result, the work is under control and IND is in a better shape than it has been for many years. I am determined to build on this by targeted, enhanced checks in areas that still concern us, such as the investigation of doubtful marriages, students and colleges. The Home Secretary and I have already been considering steps we should take in all these areas, and we will make a separate announcement soon.

Confidence in the immigration system is important so we can recognise the huge contribution legitimate migrants make to our economic prosperity and society. Migrants make up 8 per cent. of our population but generate 10 per cent. of our total wealth. They are net contributors to the Exchequer, and in all walks of life bring skills and energy that our society needs. I am today laying regulations in the House to give effect to

the new workers registration scheme for nationals of eight EU accession countries. These will be debated in both Houses next month.

Independent Review of the National Asylum Support Service:

Also published today in response to a recommendation in the Home Affairs Committee's report is the Report of the independent review of the operation of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). The review was established in March last year to consider the ways in which NASS operated at that time and provide me with recommendations to improve its performance. I have already published the review's key findings on 15 July last year, and provided the House with a further report on 9 February on the progress we are making in NASS. The review was established as an internal management tool to ensure improvements could be made but I have decided to also place a copy in the library of the House and on the Home Office website.

In addition:

Since last summer NASS has suspended processing of claims for back-payments of asylum support while we clarified the legal position. I can now confirm that we will only make back-payments where the missing payments result from an error on the part of NASS and the claimant is still supported by NASS. A dedicated team will work through the outstanding claims resulting from the suspension;

I am abolishing single additional payments to asylum seekers;

I am tightening up on processes for providing support to single failed asylum seekers under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 which provides for exceptional help to those asylum applicants whose claims have failed;

Iraqis will no longer be routinely eligible for section 4 support unless they are co-operating with voluntary returns. This is in line with our section 4 policy for other nationalities now that we will begin returning failed asylum seekers to Iraq from April, as previously announced;

Our contract with Landmark was terminated on 23 March this year. I am grateful to all our local authority and voluntary sector partners for working with us so closely to make this possible; and

I have laid draft Regulations to provide for routine annual increases in the levels of asylum support with effect from 12 April.

Finally, the Home Secretary has also today laid draft regulations to establish a workers' registration scheme for nationals of eight accession countries as the Home Secretary announced in his statement of 23 February.

Police Constable Gerald Walker

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): Today I am publishing and placing in the Library the report of the inquiry by Her Majesty's chief inspector of probation into the death of police constable Gerald Walker. In his report, the chief inspector makes a number of recommendations for changes to the way in which the probation, prison and police services manage the release on licence, supervision and revocation of licence of offenders who are serving part of their sentence under supervision in the community. The services have accepted those recommendations in full. I am therefore able to report that I am today also placing in the Library a copy of the detailed action plan which I have agreed with the key correctional services agencies to ensure that the lessons of PC Walker's tragic death are learned and appropriate changes are introduced.

Police constable Walker was a serving officer of the Nottinghamshire constabulary at the time of his death at the hands of David Parfitt in Nottingham following the tragic events of 7 January last year. Parfitt had been convicted of robbery on 16 May 2002 and sentenced to two years imprisonment. He was released into the supervision of staff of the Nottinghamshire probation area on 11 September 2002. His licence, which in the normal way would have run until 13 March 2003 included among other conditions, a requirement that Parfitt undergo regular testing for the presence of class A drugs as arranged by the probation service. He was also subject for the first 60 days of his period in the community to an electronically monitored home detention curfew condition which required that he remain at his approved address between 7.15 pm and 7.15 am.

At the time PC Walker was killed, Parfitt had completed his period of home detention curfew without breaking the conditions of that curfew, but had recorded a number of positive tests for the presence of class A drugs and had failed to attend a number of appointments with his supervising officer. As a consequence, his supervising officer had requested, and the Home Office approved, the revocation of Mr Parfitt's licence on 9 December 2002.

Parfitt was unlawfully at large from that date until 8 January 2003, when he was arrested by the Nottinghamshire police. During that time, Parfitt caused the injuries to PC Walker from which he subsequently died when the officer fell from a vehicle in which Parfitt was seeking to escape. Parfitt was subsequently convicted of manslaughter for the death of PC Walker and was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment.

PC Gerald Walker's attempts to arrest David Parfitt were the actions of a brave man and a dedicated police officer. They deserve the unreserved commendation of the House. His death as a consequence of Parfitt's actions was an irreparable loss to the Nottinghamshire police service and the people of Nottingham, but even more a personal tragedy for his wife and family. I know that I speak for the whole House in expressing my deepest sympathy and condolences to Mrs. Tracy Walker for her loss.

Following PC Walker's death, Mrs Walker was not satisfied that the correctional services agencies had been as open with her about the circumstances of her husband's death as they were required to be. She was concerned that failures in the way in which Parfitt's case had been handled had actually contributed to the situation which led to the death of her husband. She formally complained to the national probation service and on 13 December last year I, together with my hon. Friend the Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety, asked HM Chief Inspector of Probation, Professor Rod Morgan, to carry out an

inquiry into the actions of the prison service, Nottinghamshire probation area and Nottinghamshire constabulary in relation to the events which culminated in and followed the death of PC Walker.

I have now received the report of that inquiry. On behalf of myself and my hon. Friend I would like to take this opportunity to thank the chief inspector and his team for the scrupulous manner in which they have approached this important and sensitive inquiry.

Professor Morgan's report covers issues at both the local, operational level and in respect of the national policy which informed local practice. He reports that he found a number of failings in the handling of Parfitt's case which, if carried out differently, could have resulted in the earlier revocation of his licence and the possibility of his earlier arrest. He makes a number of recommendations for changes affecting all three services which he believes will reduce the risk of similar failings arising in future and which will contribute to the greater safety of the public.

Professor Morgan also identifies serious flaws in the way that the Probation Service dealt with Mrs Walker.

Professor Morgan has identified a number of areas in which our present practice for the safe management of offenders in the community can and should be improved. The Government and services accept Professor Morgan's analysis and will implement the changes he proposes. The action plan I have today placed in the Library sets out how we propose to take forward the implementation of the key recommendations outlined by the inquiry report.

Money Laundering Reporting System

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Caroline Flint): An important asset in our fight against crime is the system under which businesses report money laundering to the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) and that information is analysed for use in investigations. I am therefore pleased to report that substantial improvements to that system have been achieved over recent months. The reforms must continue and be built on but it is clear that new arrangements are being developed which have the potential to have a greater impact on crime.

The setting up of the Money Laundering Reporting Taskforce:

> In September 2003, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary set up a Taskforce to follow up the findings of a review by the consultants KPMG, commissioned by the Home Office, on the regime for handling reports relating to money laundering. The Taskforce's membership is drawn from key interested parties in the public and private sectors and the Financial Services Authority. It has given me an interim report on the progress of follow-up and the key challenges which remain in delivering a better system.

Summary of the key findings of the Taskforce:

> The view of the Taskforce is that the money laundering reporting regime has an important role to play in the fight against crime and terrorism, but equally that the burden the system places on reporting institutions and the public purse must be proportionate. This requires a system that delivers, and is seen to deliver, value to law enforcement, and which must be robust from end to end (from reporting institution via NCIS to law enforcement and the criminal justice system). Considerable progress has been made since the publication in July 2003 of the KPMG report, but these improvements must be sustained and much still remains to be done. The Taskforce believes the Government should keep the reporting regime under review to ensure it is, and remains, effective and proportionate and that better systems are needed to measure its costs and benefits.

Key challenges identified by the Taskforce:

The Taskforce considered that the key challenges over the system are:

> All those involved in the reporting regime need to turn the closer co-operation of recent months into effective action and the system must be developed, not in isolation, but as a key element of the UK's wider anti- money laundering policy;
>
> NCIS need to ensure they can respond to the further increase in reports expected with the widening from 1 March of the range of institutions covered by the Money Laundering Regulations and related reporting obligations. A key element in this is successful operation of the new, differential, reporting system just introduced by NCIS which covers activities that will be of little intelligence value;
>
> NCIS and law enforcement agencies need to provide more support to those institutions reporting on money laundering, so as to improve the quality of those reports;
>
> Disclosing institutions need to continue to work to improve their staffs awareness of reporting obligations, compliance with the law and the production of good quality reports;
>
> The public sector needs to communicate better with disclosing institutions about the reporting regime and to recognise the diverse nature of the businesses in the regulated sector and the money laundering risks they face. To address this issue, the Taskforce has been working on developing and implementing a short-term and long-term communications strategy;

The Taskforce identified the limited capacity of police forces to follow up the intelligence derived from reports on money laundering as one of the main barriers to an effective system.

The Government's response to the interim report:

The Government welcome the improvements made to date to the reporting system to help fight crime. The Taskforce has found that information from reports on money laundering is now being analysed better and sent on to law enforcement agencies much more quickly; but also stressed that these improvements must be sustained and much still remains to be done. I have therefore asked for a further report in early summer, at which point I will consider how best we can continue to drive forward and monitor progress on this important task.

The reporting system is a key element in the United Kingdom's defences against money laundering and an important source of intelligence on all types of acquisitive crime (drugs trafficking, theft, fraud, and all other types of crime committed for financial gain). So it is crucial to ensure that it is effective but that the costs it imposes on the private sector are proportionate.

The Government recognise that the whole system is built on the work of the institutions making reports. It relies heavily on the part that the private sector play in this partnership to fight crime, and I would like here to pay tribute to the money laundering reporting officers and all the others in the private sector involved in the making of these reports.

The fight against money laundering is one element in the Government's wider strategy to take the profit out of crime. As part of this strategy I was delighted to announce on 24 February a new incentive scheme for the police. The scheme will give the police a direct

financial incentive to recover even more criminally acquired wealth, by giving them a stake in the assets they recover. They will receive a third of all assets above £40 million recovered next year, increasing to 50 per cent. in 2005–06. The maximum benefit available to the police will be £43 million in 2004–05, rising to £65 million in 2005–06.

I acknowledge that the Association of Chief Police Officers have expressly requested that money under the incentive scheme should not be ring-fenced for specific purposes and we have therefore not done that. However, at a time when police numbers in England and Wales have reached a record level and we are giving extra funding through the incentive scheme, I hope that the police will be investing more effort in working on intelligence derived from reports of money laundering. This would be in line with the National Policing Plan 2004–07, which encourages police forces to ensure that intelligence from the reporting system is used to the full.

The intelligence from the money laundering reporting system can be of great value in fighting all manner of acquisitive crime. The reporting system is a key element in our strategy, and it is crucial to ensure that we use the information from reports as effectively as possible to detect and deter criminals.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Iraq (Reconstruction)

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): I visited Iraq from 22–23 March. In Baghdad I met the Iraqi Governing Council, Ministers and representatives of non-Government organisations, as well as Ambassador Bremer and other staff from the Coalition Provisional Authority. In Basra I visited two development projects, met leaders of women's groups and held discussions with CPA South staff.

Significant progress is being made. Iraq's economy is recovering with oil output now over 2.5 million barrels per day, and reconstruction projects are bringing results. I visited Al Faw, to see the installation of 5 x 2MW diesel generators, funded by DFID, which should provide the 45,000 citizens of Al Faw with 24 hours of electricity every day.

In Basra I visited the Rzero Water Treatment Plant. This is part of a major programme to renew the Basra water supply. The USA is providing most of the capital investment, alongside some money provided by the Development Fund for Iraq, to extend new water mains to the poorest areas of Basra, and in doing so create up to 2,000 jobs. The DFID-financed team in CPA South helps to coordinate the whole programme. It should provide a good model for future collaboration.

Successful reconstruction is bringing new challenges. Sustaining the improvements in infrastructure will require difficult political decisions by the new Iraqi Government about charging customers realistic rates for services such as electricity and water, and strengthening the Iraqi institutions that run these utilities. the public distribution system for food and Iraq's state owned enterprises will also need reform. The IMF and World Bank will have a significant role to play in this.

Security remains a major concern for the Iraqis and those who are helping them. But encouraging progress is being made in recruiting for the new Iraqi security forces, and training programmes are underway.

The transitional administrative law is a significant development in the political process. At the Governing Council's invitation the UN has agreed to play a major role in facilitating the formation of the interim Government and the preparation for elections. The handover on 30 June will be a big step. From 1 July Iraqis will have to address their concerns to their own Government. However, donors will still have a significant role, and we are working to make the transition as smooth as possible and to ensure that donors coordinate their programmes effectively.

The Minister for Municipalities and Public Works, Mrs Nasreen Berwari, joined me in Baghdad to launch DFID's interim Country Assistance Plan for Iraq, which I announced to the House in a written statement on 23 February (Col: 7WS), Copies of the plan are in the Libraries of both Houses. At the same time I was able to confirm that DFID is making an initial contribution of £70 million to the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq: £40 million of this will be spent through the World Bank's Trust Fund and £30 million through the UN's, We are also providing £8.5 million to the International Finance Corporation for its programme for small and medium enterprises in Iraq, which will enable it to start promoting much needed business activity and employment.

Recent events remind us to take nothing for granted in Iraq, but overall reconstruction is going better than many predicted. However, it will require a sustained effort from the Iraqis, with support from the international community, to ensure that it succeeds.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Liberia

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell): With the support of Her Majesty's Government, the United Nations Security Council on 12 March unanimously adopted UN Security Council Resolution 1532(2004). The resolution imposes an asset freeze against Charles Taylor, former President of Liberia, his wife Jewell Howard Taylor and his son Charles Taylor Jr. The asset freeze will also target senior officials of the former Taylor regime, and other close allies and associates of Taylor, as designated by the Committee established by UN Security Council Resolution 1521 (2004). The legal basis for the asset freeze is that Charles Taylor and others continue to use misappropriated funds to undermine peace and stability in Liberia and the region. The resolution includes humanitarian and other exemptions to the freeze, and states the intention to consider whether and how to make frozen assets available to the Government of Liberia.

Zimbabwe

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell): With the support of Her Majesty's Government, Common Position 2002/145/CFSP and EC Regulation

310/2002 imposing EU sanctions against Zimbabwe were renewed and replaced by Common Position 2004/161/CFSP and EC Regulation 314/2004 on 19 February 2004. The measures include an arms embargo and ban on related technical assistance, with specific exemptions; an embargo on equipment that might be used for internal repression; a travel ban on listed Zimbabwean officials, who are undermining democracy, human rights and the rule of law, preventing them from entering the EU, with standard criteria for exemptions; and an assets freeze against the listed officials, with certain specific exemptions. The list of officials (in the Annex to the Common Position) has been increased from 79 to 95. The measures in the new Common Position and Regulation follow the EU Guidelines on Implementation and Evaluation of Restrictive Measures (Sanctions) in the Framework of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, which were adopted on 8 December 2003. The measures apply for 12 months from 21 February 2004. Amendments or renewal of the measures will be made if their stated objective has not been met.

TRANSPORT

Central Railway

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Kim Howells): I have today written to the Chairman of Central Railway declining the company's request for the Government to promote a Hybrid Bill to seek powers for Central Railway's proposal to build a wholly privately financed dedicated rail freight line from North-West England to the Channel Tunnel.

The Government have carefully considered Central's proposals and has held extensive and constructive discussions with the company. While such a scheme could make a contribution to increasing the carriage of freight by rail, Central Railway has not substantiated the likely financeability of the proposals. The Government also have concerns about the operational effects on the existing rail network and on the capacity of the construction and financial markets, and the mitigation of the adverse environmental impacts.

The promoters have received expressions of interest from a number of possible debt providers but these are generally substantially caveated. Neither have they demonstrated that the significant amount of equity finance would be forthcoming.

Central Railway has claimed that no call would be made on the public purse. However, once the Government have agreed to promote a Bill, inescapably they would be taken to be backing the project. Should initial finance not be raised, or the project run into financial difficulty once work was under way, the Government of the day could not escape intense pressure to intervene. The Government have therefore concluded that it cannot promote a Bill against such risks.

The Government are supporting investment in enhancing the rail network, including capacity for rail freight, through other projects. In particular, the west coast main line upgrade and the channel tunnel rail link, together costing over £12 billion, will provide substantial extra capacity, including for freight.

Written Ministerial Statements

Friday 26 March 2004

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders

The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. John Prescott): I am delighted to announce the award of a total of £192.5 million to three more housing market renewal pathfinders over the next two years to implement their strategic schemes. The funding comes from the £500 million market renewal fund announced in February 2003 in "*Sustainable Communities: building for the future*".

The investment from the market renewal fund will be complemented by significant investment from other public programmes and the private sector. This will enable actions to be taken which will lead to the creation of long-term sustainable communities.

The allocation of resources to these schemes marks another key step in our commitment to deliver thriving sustainable communities in those areas devastated by low demand housing and abandonment.

I am announcing today that the South Yorkshire market renewal pathfinder will receive £71 million, that the East Lancashire market renewal pathfinder will receive £68 million and that Oldham and Rochdale market renewal pathfinder will receive £53.5 million until March 2006 to help to tackle the terrible problems caused by low demand. This is in addition to an allocation of £4 million each for an early action programme which they received in June 2003.

By March 2006 the pathfinders expect to deliver:

In South Yorkshire the demolition of over 1,600 homes; the refurbishment of over 2,000 homes; over 100 new homes built; significant improvements to housing environments affecting 21,000 homes; and additional management measures to over 16,000 homes.

In East Lancashire the demolition of almost 800 homes; the refurbishment of 1,100 homes; over 100 new homes built; significant improvements to housing environments affecting 43,000 homes; and additional management measures to over 73,000 homes.

In Oldham Rochdale the demolition of nearly 300 houses; the acquisition of over 400 homes; the refurbishment of over 350 homes; significant improvements to housing environments affecting over 3,000 homes; and additional management measures to over 11,000 homes.

Each of the pathfinder schemes has been independently scrutinised by the Audit Commission which has published a report on each scheme. The Audit Commission has looked at the evidence base and the proposed strategy to help ensure that the schemes are realistic, offer value for money and will deliver long-term housing market renewal. To meet this aim, the Audit Commission has made a number of recommendations about each scheme. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and each pathfinder have accepted all the recommendations and funding will depend on compliance.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Performance Targets 2004–05

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Gerry Sutcliffe): I have set Companies House the following targets for the year 2004–05:

A fully electronic operation

To achieve 15 per cent. take-up for electronic submission of documents by the end of 2004–05, 35 per cent. take-up by the end of 2005–06 and 55 per cent. take-up by the end of 2006–07.

Readily and freely accessible information

To ensure that products and services on Companies House Direct and WebCheck are available for 98 per cent. of the time between the core hours of 7 am and 8 pm, Monday to Friday.

To ensure that the web filing service is available to customers for a minimum 98 per cent. of the time between the core hours of 7 am and 8 pm, Monday to Friday.

An efficient reliable and up to date registry

To achieve, on average, a monthly compliance rate for accounts and annual returns submitted of 92 per cent.

To ensure that 96.5 per cent. of all forms submitted to Companies House are captured error-free.

To ensure that of 98 per cent. of images placed on the Companies House image system are legible.

To ensure that at least 99 per cent. of images to be placed on the image system are made available within three days.

To maintain a unit cost reduction of 3 per cent. in real terms on document registration

To achieve, taking one year with another, a 3.5 per cent. average rate of return based on the operating surplus expressed as a percentage of average net assets.

To pay all bills due within 30 days, or on other agreed credit terms, on receipt of goods or services or a valid invoice whichever is later.

Customers who are highly satisfied with our services

To resolve 97 per cent. of complaints within five days.

The Chief Executive to reply within 10 days to all letters from Members of Parliament delegated to her for reply.

To achieve a score of more than 82 per cent. in each quarterly Companies House customer satisfaction survey.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Gerry Sutcliffe): I am pleased to announce that in the light of a strong performance by The Insolvency Service in 2003–04 I have been able to set it a series of challenging targets for 2004–05 and 2005–06 that reflect the general pressure on the public service to deliver increasing efficiency and value for money. Official Receivers and their staffs have a major role to play in delivering the personal insolvency reforms under the Enterprise Act 2002 which come into operation on 1 April 2004 and the new financial regime to which it moves on the same date will provide the flexibility it needs to respond to variations in caseloads within financial years and over longer periods. Under

this new financial regime the service is expected to generate sufficient income from fees and charges to defray the total cost of its case administration, estate banking and professional regulation activities. Improvement in its customer focus is reflected in high levels of customer satisfaction and I expect he service to build on this over the coming years. I have asked the chief executive to continue the development of a range of outcome-focused measures, particularly in the regulatory area. At the same time as ensuring that its enforcement action is proportionate and aligned to the policies that promote enterprise and the responsible use of credit, I have also asked the agency to pay particular attention to its role in ensuring high standards of commercial conduct.

The targets set out in the table below reflect the variety of the Service's operations.

It will reduce the cost of its policy work by 9 per cent. in 2004–05.

The Agency will reduce the average time for securing a disqualification from 24 months to 22 months.

It will reduce the 2004–05 cost of enforcement activity by 4 per cent.

It will establish a benchmark unit cost for enforcement activity during 2004–05 and then further reduce that cost by 25 per cent. by March 2006.

It will increase enforcement activity outputs by 41 per cent. in 2005–06 over the 2004–05 baseline.

It will action 90 per cent. of redundancy payment claims within six weeks and will increase the manpower productivity of processing such claims by 11 per cent. in 2004–05.

It will increase the percentage of user satisfaction as measured by the User Satisfaction Index from 86 per cent. to 88 per cent.

It will retain Charter Mark by Summer 2004 and will retain Investors in People accreditation in January 2006.

It will maintain the amount of open insolvency cases at no more than 12 months' input and by 1 April 2006 it will reduce the case administration fee from that prevailing at 1 April 2004 by 8.5 per cent. on a like for like basis.

It will action 100 per cent of invoices for payment within 30 days of receipt, and 97 per cent. within 20 days. It will also action 98 per cent. of Insolvency Service account payments within four days of their requisition.

Based on an expected reduction of 6.3 per cent. in 2003–04, it will further reduce the costs of the accommodation and procurement functions by 8 per cent. by April 2006.

British American Tobacco

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): In response to recommendations in a report dated 14 June 2000 on the tobacco industry and the health risks of smoking, which was published by the Health Select Committee, my predecessor launched an investigation under Section 447 of the Companies Act 1985 to look at allegations that British American Tobacco has been involved in smuggling.

The investigation has been completed. It has not uncovered material indicating a basis for launching a criminal investigation and the Department does not propose to take any further action.

Information obtained under section 447 of the Companies Act 1985 is confidential and may not be published or disclosed except in strictly defined circumstances under section 449 of the Companies Act 1985

TREASURY

Tax Avoidance

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): Legislation is to be included in the Finance Bill 2004 to prevent tax avoidance schemes which seek to work round the legislation announced on 10 February 2004. The new legislation will only apply to losses from a trade involving the exploitation of film, apart from a trade involving the production of a film or the acquisition of the master version of a film. It will not therefore affect partnerships which operate within the specific relief for qualifying films. For trading losses which arise in any of the first four years that a partner carries on a trade, relief for set-off against other income will be denied where a partner does not spend a significant amount of time in the partnership trade and is guaranteed to receive income from the partnership. The changes will have effect from today.

A copy of today's Inland Revenue news release giving the relevant background to this measure is being deposited in the Libraries of both Houses and is also accessible on the Inland Revenue website: http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 29 March 2004

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Green Belt Statistics

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): In 2000, the Government published figures on the area of land designated as green belt in England, based on figures in plans that had been adopted by 1997. I am pleased to announce today the publication of statistics that show changes to the amount of green belt since then. In future, such figures will be published on an annual basis, and will be used to monitor the Government's target to maintain or increase the amount of green belt in each region.

The statistics show that since 1997 there has been an increase of around 25,000 hectares in the amount of green belt identified in adopted local and unitary development plans in England. In addition, there are proposals for an additional 12,000 hectares of green belt that are currently being taken forward in plans that have not yet reached adoption. This figure does not include changes to the green belt proposed in the New Forest, where land will be re-designated from green belt to national park once the national park has been formally designated. This comprises some 46,000 hectares of land in the area covered by New Forest district council. In view of this re-designation, the Government does not intend that these figures should be included in monitoring progress towards its target of maintaining or increasing the amount of green belt in each region.

Copies of the statistical release are available in the Libraries of both Houses.

High Hedges

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Yvette Cooper): We have today launched a public consultation on implementing Part 8 of the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 in England. This gives local authorities the powers to deal with complaints about high hedges that are having an adverse affect on a neighbour's amenity.

We are seeking views on draft regulations covering certain procedural details such as the fees that authorities should charge for this service and how appeals against their decisions should be dealt with. We are also seeking views on the draft guidance on how local authorities should administer the complaints system. This offers advice on how authorities should assess whether a hedge is having an adverse affect on a neighbour's amenity. Copies of the consultation paper and the draft guidance have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The consultation papers have been sent to local authorities in England, specialist and other interested organisations. They have also been published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's web site www.odpm.gov.uk. The closing date for responses is 30 June 2004.

This is another step towards tackling the misery that can be caused by high hedges and we are on course to have the system fully operational towards the end of this year.

TREASURY

Civil Registration Review

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Ruth Kelly): The House will wish to be aware of developments on the Government's plans for modernising civil registration.

On 10 July 2003 the Government published the consultation paper "*Civil Registration: Delivering Vital Change*". This set out our proposals to reform civil registration in England and Wales using powers in the Regulatory Reform Act 2001. The proposed changes will make it easier both for citizens to deal with Government at key points in their lives and in the lives of their families and for the Government to modernise this public service by exploiting improved information and communication technology. I am pleased to be able to tell the House that there were almost 3,400 responses to the consultation document. This indicates the very real interest amongst a wide range of stakeholders—registration practitioners and managers, the public and other interested organisations—in this area of reform.

Our intention was to introduce a regulatory reform order in this Session of Parliament. This remains the case in respect of provisions relating to registration of births and deaths and access to birth and death records. I have however decided to postpone the presentation of provisions relating to marriage till early in the next Session. The splitting of the proposals in this way will ensure that the momentum for reform is sustained whilst, at the same time, providing an opportunity for the second regulatory reform order to take account of Parliament's wishes on the civil partnership legislation.

This strategy will not hinder the Government's plans for implementation that will begin in 2005 with improved information technology to forward registration information to the Registrar General and the structural reform of the local registration service.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Government Co-operation Faith Communities

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): Today my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and I launched "*Working Together—Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities*". The report is aimed at Government Departments and faith communities and includes recommendations on what each can do to engage more effectively in partnership working together.

The report is the result of a wide-ranging cross-Government review, led by the Home Office, involving Ministers, officials and senior faith community representatives working in partnership together. To ensure the report's recommendations are being acted on and progressed, review members will reconvene in a year to evaluate the impact of the review.

The report is entitled "*Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities*". Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses, and may be obtained from the Faith Communities Unit in my Department or through the Home Office website.

Special Branch

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. David Blunkett): Following a recommendation made by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary in his report on special branch and ports policing in January 2003, I am today publishing redrafted guidelines for special branch work in the United Kingdom.

They have been redrafted in partnership with the Scottish Executive and the Northern Ireland Office. We have consulted fully with all interested parties, including the Association of Chief Police Officers, the National Co-ordinator of Special Branch, the National Co-ordinator of Ports Policing and the Security Service.

The new guidelines reflect that the current operational priority for special branch is counter terrorism work. They also detail the role roles and responsibilities of officers and the local, regional and national structure of special branch. They provide clarity on the work of special branch and make special branch duties more understandable and transparent.

Passport Service

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Beverley Hughes): The United Kingdom Passport Service Corporate and Business plan for 2004–09 will be published tomorrow. Copies of the plan will be placed in the Library of the House.

DEFENCE

Bowman

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): On 19 July 2001, I informed the House that, after years of delay and forecast cost growth, we had selected a preferred supplier to take forward the BOWMAN programme. Although our approved in service date was December 2004, we set a demanding target to deliver by 30 March 2004. This target is just 30 months from the September 2001 contract awarded to General Dynamics United Kingdom Ltd, a challenge unprecedented on such a major and complex acquisition project. Our priority was to deliver a secure, reliable voice communications replacement for Clansman and I am pleased to report to the House that BOWMAN has achieved its in service date on this basis, ahead of the target. This achievement and the capability it provides will enable the programme to progress to its next key milestone, the delivery of war fighting capability in 2005.

Once fully implemented, BOWMAN will provide a secure tactical + voice and data communications system for our land forces and selected elements of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, until at least 2025. As well as being man-portable, it will be an integral part of the communications fit of major equipments such as warships, main battle tanks and helicopters. The provision of secure voice communications down to section level represents a step-change in capability for the armed forces as they migrate from Clansman to BOWMAN. Other functions which BOWMAN is designed to deliver, such as automatic position reporting and an ability to pass digital data around the battlefield have been demonstrated in principle on field trials and their development is on course.

At the end of 2002, nearly a year and a half into the BOWMAN contract, we extended it to further develop the battle management system and to enhance integration with systems and sensors on board our key armoured platforms—a programme known as CIP. A key advantage of aligning both programmes is that time and cost are saved through converting vehicles only once. There has been positive progress on CIP but the performance of the battle management system in recent field trials leads us to conclude that a few more months of work will be required to develop and fully demonstrate its effectiveness.

BOWMAN will provide a marked increase in operational tempo, firepower lethality and survivability across all our armed services and will be a key enabler for the UK's network-enabled capability. There is a widespread commitment to BOWMAN across the services and industry stakeholder community and it has already demonstrated greater military capability overall than Clansman. The first brigade converted to BOWMAN will undertake a further 15 months of unit and collective performance training, and as with the programme hitherto, the brigade will be closely involved in the development and proving of BOWMAN.

Achieving the BOWMAN in service date is an important step on the road to the ultimate goal, delivering a robust war fighting capability that fully meets the requirements of the user in service. It is a key milestone on the path to achieving war fighting operational readiness in 2005 and represents a huge success for smart acquisition as well as a big step forward for the British armed forces.

Nuclear Weapons (Safety Arrangements)

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): In 1992, the then Chief Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Defence, Sir Ronald Oxburgh, conducted a review of the safety of nuclear weapons. It was reported to Parliament House of Commons, 13 July 1992, *Official Report*, column 520, that he had recommended the inauguration of a safety "champion". A position entitled Nuclear Weapon Safety Adviser was subsequently created, and this has had two incumbents. More recently, further work has been done on safety management arrangements in the Department in general, and in the nuclear programmes in particular, to reflect policy and organisational developments. As a result, we have appointed a Nuclear Weapon Regulator to provide assurance about safety in the nuclear weapons programme. In so doing, it was recognised that the tasks of this official would be very similar to those of

the Nuclear Weapon Safety Adviser, and it was decided that, when the regulator was ready to conduct business, the safety adviser post should close. This has recently occurred.

Regional Prime Contract (South-West)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): Debut Services (South-West) Limited, a joint venture between Babcock International Group and Bovis Lend Lease, has been awarded the regional prime contract for the Ministry of Defence's estate in the south-west. This follows successful completion of the clarification phase.

The seven-year contract, worth in the order of £480 million, is the second in a series of five such arrangements covering the estate and will provide for capital works, property maintenance and facilities management services, throughout the south-west of England.

The MOD has undertaken to make significant improvements in the overall condition of its estate by changing its organisational structures and introducing prime contracting methods. Encouraging innovation and efficiency, Regional Prime Contracting is a key initiative that aims to provide a better quality of service and greater value for money through suitably incentivised contracts conforming to the principles of "Smart Acquisition".

WORK AND PENSIONS

Debt Management

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): I am today announcing that contracts have been signed with four private sector companies to provide debt collection services to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The contractors are Commercial Collections Services, Eversheds, Legal and Trade Collections and the Lewis Group.

The contractors will provide support with two categories of debt: benefit debt and commercial debt. They will act as recovery agents, earning commission on amounts recovered and passed to DWP. The ownership of the debt will remain with DWP at all times.

The contracts will offer support to our existing debt management operations rather than replacing or outsourcing them. There will be no job reductions in DWP as a result of this announcement. So DWP will continue to handle negotiation and civil enforcement of debts in-house. The cases transferred will be those where DWP has been unsuccessful.

The contractors will adhere to strict contractual controls on their behaviour and DWP will put robust contract management processes in place to ensure compliance. Contractors will also have to adhere to the codes of conduct of their own supervising bodies (e.g. the Credit Services Association or the Law Society) and also the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

Benefit debt includes overpaid benefits, where the overpayment is caused by customer error, and outstanding social fund loans. The debts transferred will be those where the debtor is not currently in receipt of a DWP benefit, they have refused to repay voluntarily and DWP has been unable to obtain full recovery. Each debtor will be given the opportunity to make an arrangement to repay their debt before their case is transferred to one of the contractors.

DWP has a number of categories of debts owed by commercial organisations including:

money owed by insurance companies by way of compensation for NHS costs following Road Traffic Accidents and repayment of Social Security benefits following compensation awards;

recoupment from employment tribunal awards—where employers are required to repay social security benefits paid to employees following, for example, unfair dismissal;

amount owed through contracts such as European social fund, training and general supplies.

As with benefit debt, the organisations owing money will be given the opportunity to make an arrangement to repay DWP before the case is transferred to the private sector for collection.

There are three main purposes to this exercise:

to reduce the debts outstanding to the Department;

to reinforce the message that debts have to be repaid, especially those that arose as a result of fraud;

to learn from the private sector and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of DWP's Debt Management organisation.

The contract will be for an initial two-year period to March 2006, with the possibility of extension. First cases will be transferred towards the end of April 2004 with each Contractor receiving an initial tranche of 50,000 cases. After this initial allocation there is no guarantee of additional cases being referred.

Business Plans

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Andrew Smith): I am today able to announce the 2004–05 annual performance targets for three of the executive agencies of the Department for Work and Pensions: Jobcentre Plus, Child Support Agency and Appeals Service. The targets I have agreed are set out below.

Further information on the plans of each of the businesses in 2004–05 is contained in their individual business plans which have been published today. Copies have been placed in the Library.

Performance targets for The Pension Service, Disability and Carers Service and The Rent Service, responsibility for which transfers to my Department from 1 April 2004, will be announced in due course.

In line with the Department's Public Service Agreement, I will also be publishing unit cost targets that will be set to ensure that Jobcentre Plus, Child Support Agency and The Pension Service continue to deliver business efficiently.

Jobcentre Plus:

Helping people into work[1]: to achieve a total points score of 7,295,100 based on job entry outcomes.

Tackling fraud and error: by March 2005 to reduce losses from fraud and error in working age Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance to no more than 6.0 per cent. of the monetary value of these benefits paid during the year.

Helping employers fill their vacancies: to ensure that at least 84 per cent. of employers placing their vacancies with Jobcentre Plus will have a positive outcome.

Business Delivery[2]: to ensure processes are delivered efficiently, accurately and to specified standards in 89.6 per cent. of cases checked.

Serving our customers well: to achieve an 81 per cent. customer service level in the delivery of the standards set out in the Jobcentre Plus Customer and Employer Charters.

Child Support Agency:

All targets refer to new scheme cases.

Case compliance: by 31 March 2005 to be collecting child maintenance and/or arrears from 78 per cent. of all cases with a maintenance liability using the collection service.

Cash compliance: by 31 March 2005 to be collecting 75 per cent. of child maintenance and/or arrears due to be paid through the collection service.

Cash and case collection: to develop for introduction from 1 April 2005 individual targets for case and cash compliance to measure the collection of current maintenance separately from the collection of arrears.

Accuracy: by 31 March 2005 accuracy on the last decision made for all maintenance calculations checked in the year to be correct to the nearest penny in at least 90 per cent. of cases.

Customer perception: to develop and introduce a client perception target by October 2004.

Debt: to develop and introduce a debt reduction target by October 2004.

Appeals Service:

The average waiting time for an appeal to be heard will be no more than 11 weeks from the time of receipt by the Appeals Service[3]

The number of cases over 20 weeks old as at 1 April 2004 will be reduced by at least 15 per cent. by 31 March 2005.

For cases returned by the Commissioner, the average waiting time for an appeal to be re-heard will be no more than eight weeks from the date of return to the Appeals Service[4].

Notes

1. This target is measured by a points score system which focuses efforts and resources on helping into work people in priority groups such as lone parents, disabled people and those in the most disadvantaged areas. For each person that Jobcentre Plus places in work it will earn a point score ranging from 12 points for, for example, a lone parent, to one point for someone who is already employed.

2. This target measures standards of delivery of five key Jobcentre Plus business processes: Income Support accuracy, Jobseeker's Allowance accuracy, Incapacity Benefit accuracy, Labour Market Interventions, and attendance at an independent assessment to identify basic skills needs.

3. Excludes stayed cases awaiting decision in lead cases in a higher court (the effective date will commence from withdrawal of stay being notified).

4. Excludes cases requiring further evidence.

Social Fund

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): I am pleased to announce that the gross discretionary social fund budget for 2004–05 will be £689 million. This includes a further increase in net treasury funding of £10 million, which is additional to last year's extra £20 million. This means that net funding is now £30 million higher than in 2002–03, and is the second of three annual increases from a £90 million boost for the discretionary social fund announced in the autumn 2002 pre-budget report.

After careful consideration, we have decided to allocate all the extra net funding to community care grant needs. We have therefore increased the community care grant (CCG) budget by £10 million. This is a further significant increase that will help the most vulnerable. It has been distributed so that every district benefits by an increase in their CCG budget and districts move closer to meeting the same proportion of demand nationally.

The gross loans budget for 2004–05 will be £560 million, which represents an increase of £2 million over the April 2003 allocation. The increase is owing to higher loan recoveries and setting a lower contingency reserve than 2003–04. To maintain fairness within the scheme, the loans budget will continue to be allocated to districts to support consistency of outcome for applicants wherever they live.

The sum of £1 million will be retained centrally as a contingency reserve, which, for example will provide additional help to districts facing unexpected and unplanned expenditure.

Details of individual district budget allocations have been placed in the Library.

The discretionary social fund budget is cash limited. Budgets are allocated to districts on 1 April each year.

The gross discretionary SF budget allocated for 2004–05 is £689 million made up of:

New money (AME)	£168.2 million
Forecast loan recovery	£520.8 million

This was allocated as follows:

Loans	£560 million
Grants	£128 million
Contingency reserve	£1 million

If the forecast for loan recoveries proves to be an underestimate, any additional recoveries can be allocated to districts during the year.

The contingency reserve is held centrally and allocations made from it reimburse districts for expenditure resulting from a local accident or disaster (eg, flooding).

Since April 1997, the gross discretionary social fund budget has increased by £221.5 million from £467.5 million to £689 million, an increase of more than 47 per cent.

Since April 1997, the community care grant budget has increased by £31 million from £97 million to £128 million, an increase of nearly 32 per cent.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will be making a number of minor changes to the discretionary social fund, with effect from 5 April 2004. The changes to the fund are minor clarifications of guidance and directions, and, in the main, are consequential to legislative changes being made in respect of other social security benefits.

Details of the changes have been placed in the Library.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Falklands Islands

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell): On 15 and 16 March 2004 the Argentine naval Icebreaker, Almirante Irizar sailed through the Falklands outer conservation zone and the Falklands interim conservation zone. These are areas for which the Falkland Islands Government issues fishing licences. During the time that it was inside these zones, the Argentine vessel was challenging other vessels to identify themselves. While transit of the conservation zones is permissible, the policing of the zones by a foreign vessel contravenes the Falkland Islands exclusive jurisdiction.

We asked the Argentine Government for an explanation of the vessel's actions. Their response was not satisfactory. We have therefore made a formal protest to the Argentine Government concerning the actions of the Almirante Irizar, underlining the need to ensure that this type of incident does not happen again. This note also reiterated that HMG has no doubts about UK sovereignty over the Falkland Islands.

I have spoken to Falkland Island councillors about this incident. I share their concerns and I have briefed them on our response. I assured them of our continued firm support.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 30 March 2004

HEALTH

NHS Charges

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): We have laid before the House regulations to increase the income level at which people are entitled to full remission of national health service charges, payment of travel costs, national health service sight tests and optical vouchers, that is full help through the national health service low-income scheme. Currently, people are entitled to full help through this scheme when their income is equal to, or less than, their requirements. From 6 April 2004, people will be entitled to full help if their income exceeds their requirements by up to 50 per cent. of the prescription charge. This will mean that people whose income is only marginally above income support level will now be entitled to full help.

Entitlement to income-based help with health costs in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are a matter for the devolved administrations.

Arm's Length Bodies

The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid): Two new regulatory bodies, which will operate at arm's length from the Department, come into being on 1 April: the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection (CHAI) and the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). A third regulatory Body, the Office of the Independent Regulator (OIR) came into being in January this year. The inception of these new bodies will change the Department's role in the provision and inspection of healthcare and social services. The effects that this will have on accountability arrangements are set out below.

The role of the OIR is to authorise, monitor and regulate National Health Service foundation trusts (NHSFTs). The Independent Regulator is directly accountable to Parliament, and the Department will not be able to comment on the details of the OIR's day to day management. For any questions that might arise in this area, we would provide information on the Independent Regulator's behalf, but not directly.

NHSFTs are themselves independent of the Department, and are directly accountable to their local populations and to Parliament. Because of this independent status, and NHSFTs' separate and local route of accountability, we will no longer be in a position to comment on, or provide information about, the detail of operational management within such trusts. Any such questions will be referred to the relevant NHSFT chairman.

Notwithstanding these changes, matters of national policy (including the statutory framework for the NHS, and its resources, standards and targets) will of course remain the responsibility of the Department. We will therefore continue to respond directly on these issues. We will also continue to respond directly on the services commissioned by the NHS locally, as these remain the responsibility of primary care trusts.

As with the OIR, CHAI and CSCI are independent of the Department. We will therefore provide information to Members on behalf of these bodies about their activities, but not directly. Two areas of their operations warrant particular notice. The Department has traditionally had much a closer involvement in the (performance) star ratings system. From 1 April, it will be CHAI's and CSCI's responsibility to devise the form of performance ratings, and their criteria and methodology. The Department will approve the criteria devised.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Departmental Service Charges

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): The Department has carried out a review of the basis for charging for a number of plant health, plant varieties and animal health services that it provides. Invoicing for the services concerned was suspended whilst the review was completed.

The review focused on whether the legislative basis for making charges for these services was adequate. The conclusion is that for the following services the legislative basis was not sufficient to allow the Department to impose a charge:

Plant Health

Export certificates for plants and plant products

Seed potatoes: approved stock scheme

Seed potatoes: fees for inspection of pre-basic seed potatoes

Seed potatoes: fees for investigation of complaints

Plant Varieties and Seeds

Provisional seed certification scheme

Seed samplers' and crop inspectors' examinations

Examination of seed analysts

Additional costs of meeting statutory consent conditions for GM crop varieties in national list trials

OECD /ISTA certification

Purity and germination tests

Special tests for distinctness, uniformity and stability

Animal Health

Certain aspects of the Poultry Health Scheme

Factory Inspection Scheme

Additional animal health certification issued in connection with the Classical Swine Fever outbreak in 2000.

A parallel review of Forestry Commission services has found that the legislative base for export charges of forest trees and forest products was not sufficient to impose a charge. Invoicing for this service was also suspended whilst the review was completed.

Action will now be taken to repay to customers some £2.4 million of charges that were levied over the six years prior to the suspension of charging. To take this forward, the Department and the Forestry Commission will be writing over the coming weeks to those organisations and individuals who are to be repaid.

Where required, work is underway to introduce the necessary legislation for future charging for the services affected.

The review concluded that the necessary legal base was in place to allow charging for plant health propagation scheme services provided by the Department. Charging for this service will recommence from this coming season.

TRANSPORT

Highways Agency

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Jamieson): The Highways Agency's 2004–05 business plan is published today and contains seven key targets for the Agency to deliver by 31 March 2005. These are:

Indicator	*2004–05 Target*
1. Deliver the programme of improvements to the strategic road network.	Achieve: — At least 440 progress points for the M1, M6 and M25 schemes, compared to 2003–04 forecast score of 250. — At least 95 per cent. of the major schemes progress points required to reach the score of 6,500 compared to the 2003–04 forecast score of 4,590. — Complete 20 of 26 priority action sites at junctions.
2. Deliver a demonstrable reduction in incident-related congestion and minimisation of road works-related congestion.	In establishing the Regional Control Centres (RCCs), achieve: — West Midlands RCC and traffic officers commence service. Achieve 92 of 100 points. — 140 of 155 progress points for all other RCCs and traffic officers. Establish and implement a management system to monitor and report on incident-related congestion in the West Midlands.
3. Make information available to influence travel behaviour and inform decisions.	— Make publicly available by March 2005—and maintain thereafter—traffic information for the Agency's network through a website and a dedicated voice recognition interactive telephone service. — Provide by March 2005—and maintain thereafter—on the Agency's motorway network, strategic route advice using the variable message signs (VMS) available, for all incidents causing more than 15 minutes predicted delay, and monitor its accuracy.
4. Deliver the Agency's agreed proportion of the national target. By 2010 reduce by a third (i.e. to 3,327) the number of people killed/seriously injured on trunk roads compared with the 1994–98 average of 4,991.	Reduce by at least 832 to 4,159.
5. Maintain the network in a safe and serviceable condition.	Achieve a road surface condition index score of 100 ± 1
6. Mitigate the potentially adverse impact of strategic roads and take opportunities to enhance the environment taking into account value for money.	Achieve at least 95 per cent. across the five sub targets: — Air Quality: Improve quality of at least two air quality management areas (AQMA) sites. — Biodiversity: Achieve at least 5 per cent. of the Agency's Biodiversity Action Plan extending across 15 priority targets. — Landscape: Introduce no less than four planning schemes. — Noise: Treat at least 50 lane km of concrete road surface with lower noise surfacing. — Water: Treat at least five outfalls identified as posing a pollution risk to watercourses.
7. Deliver a high level of road user satisfaction.	Achieve from the road user satisfaction survey an average annual score of at least 85 per cent. for motorways and at least 80 per cent. for trunk roads.

Explanatory notes against each of these indicators are provided in the business plan, copies of which have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Maghaberry Prison

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Paul Murphy): I wish to announce that with effect from 31 March 2004, in accordance with the powers conferred on me by Rule 5(1) of the Prisons and Young Offenders Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995, part of Maghaberry prison site, formerly the site of Maze prison, is removed from within the boundaries of Maghaberry prison. The area to be removed is indicated on the site map, which I have today placed in the Libraries of both Houses, by the words

"area to be removed from the site of Maghaberry prison".

Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Ian Pearson): The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland Annual Report and statement of accounts for 2002–03 has been deposited in the Library of the House today.

DEFENCE

Business Process Review of Defence Housing

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): I announced in July 2003 that the Ministry of Defence was conducting a business process review of the management and delivery of Defence housing, 2 July 2003, *Official Report*, column 20WS. The Review has been completed and I have placed a copy of the final report in the Library of the House.

This work has been part of a coordinated approach to the future direction of defence housing. It supports detailed work to improve accommodation through the defence housing strategy that, as set out in the Defence White Paper: "Supporting Essays", will direct the future provision of housing for service personnel and their families worldwide. It also takes forward work from earlier internal and cross-departmental studies. The Review has focused primarily on delivery and management of Defence housing in mainland UK, but it includes recommendations on our living accommodation overseas that might be considered in the future.

The main conclusions were that some improvement could be made to the processes involved with the management and delivery of Defence housing. It was also recognised that we could benefit from the synergies within Defence Estates (DE) and the Defence Housing Executive (DHE). A number of recommendations have been made to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the processes and organisations involved in delivery of Defence housing, the most significant of which are:

DHE and DE will merge from 1 April 2004. Initially DHE will be absorbed into DE as a self-contained business unit but over time Head Office processes will be merged.

The Chief Executive of DE will become responsible for the delivery of Defence housing in mainland UK.

To protect the interests of Service personnel and their families a dedicated housing customer care function will be maintained within DE with suitable governance arrangements.

Initiatives to improve customer care, particularly the housing prime contract for England and Wales, will continue.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Household Statistics

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Andrew Smith): Today I have published households below average income for 1994–95 to 2002–03. This is a report published under national statistics arrangements with headline results that cover Great Britain. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The report shows that there has been strong growth across the whole income distribution, and comparing incomes between 1996–97 and 2002–03, the poorest fifth of households have kept up with the strong income growth of middle-income households.

Steady progress has been made towards the Government's target to reduce by a quarter the number of children living in low-income households by 2004–05.

Some 700,000 fewer children are living in relative low income compared to 1996–97.

There has been a more dramatic reduction in children in "absolute" low income and this has now halved since 1996–97, equating to 2.1 million fewer children growing up with their opportunities undermined by acute financial hardship.

For pensioners below the same fixed threshold, the decline has been around two-thirds, from 2.7 million in 1996–97 to fewer than 1 million in 2002–03, meaning enhanced dignity and security for 1.8 million people during their retirement.

Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance

The Minister for Work (Mr. Desmond Browne): In a written statement on 4 December 2003, I announced the publication of the Department's second stage and final report of the review of ELCI.

The report described the work that had been undertaken since June 2003, identified the further actions we intended to take and set these in the context of a strategic approach aimed at improving the efficiency, sustainability and outcomes of the ELCI system.

A number of initiatives have been put in place to improve the functioning of the ELCI market. In addition we are working immediately to help business by a range of actions.

I am pleased to announce the publication today of a partial regulatory impact assessment on a proposal to remove the requirement for ELCI from limited companies that employ only their owner (incorporated owners/sole employees). It is estimated that there are about 300,000 such companies.

The partial assessment seeks the views of employers (in particular incorporated owners/sole traders) and insurers and their representative bodies and other stakeholders (e.g. employees, lawyers) and their representatives on the proposal. The views of the wider public are also welcome.

Copies of the partial assessment have been placed in the Library.

We will continue to take forward the initiatives and long-term proposals in the second stage report. We believe that they will continue to deliver significant, sustained improvements within the ELCI market.

Business Plan

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Andrew Smith): I am today able to announce the 2004–05 annual performance targets for the rent service, responsibility for which transfers to my Department from 1 April 2004, and the disability and carers service. The targets I have agreed are set out below.

Further information on the plans of the businesses in 2004–05 is contained in their individual business plans that have been published today. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The Rent Service

Service Delivery

To process 87 per cent. of housing benefit determinations, with an inspection, within 15 working days.

To process 87 per cent. of housing benefit determinations, without an inspection, within 3 working days.

To process 87 per cent. of pre-tenancy determinations within 4 working days.

To process 87 per cent. of redeterminations within 15 working days.

To process 87 per cent. of fair rent determinations within 40 working days.

Value for Money

Productivity: To increase productivity by 1 per cent. by the end of the year compared to last year.

Costs: To reduce the cost per case by 1 per cent. in real terms by the end of the year.

Quality: 87 per cent. of local reference rent housing benefit determinations to be upheld on redetermination.

Quality: 87 per cent. of fair rent valuations to be upheld by judicial review.

Customer Satisfaction

To raise the customer satisfaction rating, of satisfactory or better, from 87 per cent. in 2003–04 to 90 per cent. in 2004–05.

Disability and Carers Service

Business Event	*Targets for 2004–05*
Decision Making Quality: DLA	90 per cent
Decision Making Quality: AA	90 per cent
Accuracy: CA	95 per cent
Claims—Normal Rules: DLA	39 days
Claims—Normal Rules: AA	24 days
Claims: CA	24 days
Claims—Special Rules: DLA	8 days
Claims—Special Rules: AA	8 days
Renewal claims: DLA	32 days
Renewal claims: AA	23 days
Appeals: DLA	40 days
Appeals: AA	40 days
Appeals: CA	38 days

Note:
DLA – Disability living allowance
AA – Attendance allowance
CA – Carer's allowance

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 31 March 2004

HEALTH

NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr. John Hutton): We are publishing today the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency's annual business plan. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The business plan highlights the agency's achievements in 2003–04 and sets out the key tasks and targets for the coming year.

This comprehensive plan has been formulated within the context of the agency's ongoing remit to lead the modernisation of the NHS purchasing and supply function. The agency has a strategic role to set out a major development agenda for purchasing and supply in the NHS and working with the commercial directorate has developed a co-ordinated implementation plan for doing so. The business plan sets out clearly how the agency will achieve these aims.

Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): The 2004–05 business plan for the Medicines And Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has today been presented to Parliament. The plan contains the agency's key targets for the year.

Copies of the plan have been placed in the Library.

NHS Foundation Trusts

The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid): The Chairman of the Independent Regulator of NHS foundation trusts has today announced that, in accordance with section 6 of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003, the Independent Regulator has authorised the following NHS trusts as NHS foundation trusts from 1 April 2004:

Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Trust

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Trust

Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Trust

Homerton University Hospital NHS Trust

Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Trust

Peterborough Hospitals NHS Trust

Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Trust

The Royal Marsden NHS Trust

Stockport NHS Trust

Decisions on the remaining 15 applications that I have approved will be made at a later date.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Immigration Rules

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Beverley Hughes): Today I am making changes to the immigration rules that enable participants on the sectors based scheme (SBS) to extend their leave in the UK to those people whose original permit was for less than the maximum period of 12 months. Permits can be issued for a maximum of 12 months, but in many cases they are shorter. One of the key aspects of the SBS is that participants who have been granted leave for less than one year, and whom the employer wants to retain, can extend their leave, in country, for the remainder of the 12 months that the initial leave did not cover. As hon. Members already know, from 1 April there will also be a new charge of £121 for those who wish to extend their leave under the sectors based scheme. This charge may be picked up by the employer.

This procedure has been operating administratively since the launch of the scheme, and the changes to the immigration rules will simply put extensions of stay on SBS on a firmer footing within the rules.

Prisoner Suicide Prevention Strategy

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): The Home Secretary and I are determined to reduce the incidence of suicide within prisons. These tragic deaths devastate families and deeply distress both prisoners and staff. We are also committed to tackling the related but separate issues that arise from self-harm.

The ministerial roundtable on suicides, which I chair, includes representatives from the Prison Reform Trust, the Howard League for Penal Reform, Samaritans and Inquest; from HM Inspectorate of Prisons, the Independent Monitoring Boards and the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman; from the Prison Service, the National Probation Service and the Department of Health; and from prisoners themselves. The roundtable brings together a wide range of expertise that has helped to influence and support the current suicide prevention strategy launched in 2001. More recently, it has helped with the development of a strategy for the longer term and I am grateful for its important contributions.

I pay tribute to the relentless efforts of staff to save lives. Last year staff resuscitated over 211 prisoners who had made serious attempts at self-harm. In 87 of 138 prisons there were no self-inflicted deaths in 2003–04. The suicide rate (per 100,000 of average prisoner population) is 9 per cent lower than it was in 1999–2000, and the three-year rolling rate has stabilised at about 128 per 100,000.

Sadly, there are large numbers of people in prison with characteristics that contribute to a risk of suicide. These include problems with mental health, drugs and drink, troubled relationships and social exclusion, as well as a previous history of self-harm and suicidal thoughts or attempts. Identifying and caring for these prisoners is very challenging work, not least as they represent over half the prison population. It is important to note, however, that prisoners have similar rates of suicide to offenders in the community.

Central to the suicide prevention strategy that I am announcing today is the need to reduce the level of distress in prison and promote the well being of all staff and prisoners. This applies both to public and privately contracted prisons. We intend to build on current good practice and continue with the commitment of the Prison Service to treat prisoners with decency and dignity. This approach has strong support from Roundtable members and from other external organisations.

This approach forms part of the Government's national strategy for reducing suicides in the community, and is being developed in partnership with the Department of Health, which is increasingly responsible for improving health care standards in prisons. This includes the provision of mental health services as well as substance abuse interventions and maintenance programmes.

The approach is evidence based. The final evaluation of the safer local prisons programme is due in the summer. Emerging findings from the research undertaken by Dr. Alison Liebling of the Cambridge Institute of Criminology indicate that levels of distress in a prison correlate closely with suicide rates. The revised strategy will therefore concentrate on measures likely to reduce distress and promote the well-being of prisoners and staff. We will build on our existing programme which includes work on resettlement, drugs detoxification and continuing care and support, staff care and welfare, healthcare, purposeful activity, staff and managementoutlook, leadership and training.

Alongside our plans to improve the quality of prison life for both prisoners and staff, we will also target additional support for the most vulnerable. Research findings underline the importance and effectiveness of a number of specific measures. These include the appointment of suicide prevention co-ordinators in prisons; the development of in-reach mental health provision and day care centres; good case reviews; and appropriate first night centre and induction procedures.

Our strategy will include specific interventions to identify those most at risk. In January five establishments began to pilot a new assessment procedure that will be reviewed later in 2004. We will continue to put in place safer cells and other changes to the physical environment in order to minimise impulsive acts of self-harm and suicide.

This developing strategy will link existing programmes and planned investment in five broad areas of work across the Prison Service and Department of Health. These are:

Regime, activities and care planning for all prisoners;

Improved knowledge and outlooks of all staff at all levels;

Meeting the special needs of the most vulnerable prisoners;

Training and support for staff;

Design solutions to minimise impulsive acts.

The integration with the health agenda is crucial. Mental health in-reach to selected prisons and new triage-based, reception health screening arrangements have been linked to the suicide prevention strategy. Between now and March 2006 NHS mental health in-reach investment is expected to double to £20 million with in-reach services available in every prison. All local prisons are implementing the new screening system during 2004.

I attach great importance to the contribution that can be made to preventing suicides by learning from what has gone wrong in the past. From 1 April the Government have decided to transfer responsibility for investigating deaths in jails, probation hostels and Immigration and Nationality Directorate detention centres to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman. Learning from deaths, and consistently applying those lessons, will be an important strand of the developed strategy.

The strategy that I have outlined above will continue to develop and expand. The National Offender Management Service, which becomes operative in June, will provide a focus on offender management and a wider organisational framework that will boost the work in prisons and facilitate its eventual expansion into offender management in the community.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Independent Commissioner for Detained Terrorist Suspects

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Jane Kennedy): I have today arranged for copies of Dr. Bill Norris's annual report for 2003 to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

I welcome Dr Norris's report and I will consider it carefully. I will respond as soon as possible.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Iraq Survey Group

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): Charles Duelfer, the special adviser to the Director of Central Intelligence for Strategy regarding Iraqi weapons of mass destruction programs, presented a further report to US Congressional Oversight Committees on 30 March 2004. As with the previous report presented on 2 October 2003, this is a status report on work in progress. I have arranged for a copy of the unclassified text to be placed in the Library of the House.

Great Chagos Bank

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell): The Great Chagos Bank, which lies within the waters adjacent to the outer islands of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), is an exceptional example of a submerged coral atoll, providing a valuable contribution to the marine ecology of the Indian Ocean. On 17 September 2003, in order to help to conserve the natural resources of the bank, the Commissioner for

BIOT proclaimed an area including the Great Chagos Bank to be an Environmental (Preservation and protection) Zone. A copy of the proclamation, together with the relevant chart and co-ordinates, has been deposited with the UN under Article 75 of UNCLOS, and will be published in the Law of the Sea Bulletin No. 54.

Guantanamo Bay Detainees

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): A team of FCO officials, RAF personnel, British police officers and independent observers visited Guantanamo Bay between 8 and 9 March 2004.

The purpose of the visit was to return five British detainees to the UK; and to check on the welfare of the four British detainees who remain there and to explain their position to them. The camp authorities were co-operative and helpful during the visit.

An FCO official, accompanied by a police officer, informed the five British detainees on 8 March that they would be returned to the UK. Their return took place the following day, 9 March.

An FCO official also met the other four British detainees individually. A US official observed the meetings. The FCO official delivered mail for the detainees personally and brought messages back to their families. Detainees are able to send and receive mail through the camp authorities and the ICRC. Delivery remains irregular. We are considering with the US Government ways for them to improve the mail arrangements.

The FCO official asked all the British detainees about their health, diet, accommodation, opportunities for exercise and other camp facilities.

The British detainees appeared to be in satisfactory physical health but are increasingly frustrated by their continued detention. Individual welfare issues are being pursued by British officials with the US Government.

The FCO official informed the four British detainees that:

> following discussions between the British and US Governments, five other British detainees were to be returned to the UK;
>
> discussions between the two Governments on their own future continued.

The FCO official also informed Mr Abbasi and Mr Begg, both of whom have been designated by the US authorities as eligible for trial by Military Commission, that:

> if they were to be tried, the British Government has told the US Government that the trial should be fair;
>
> the two Governments continued to explore this and other possible courses of action.

The legal proceedings against Mr Abbasi and Mr Begg were suspended in July 2003 pending discussions between the British and US. The British Government's position remains that the British detainees should either be tried in accordance with international standards or they should be returned to the UK. The British Government continues to work to resolve their position.

DEFENCE

International Security Assistance Force

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): Since the inception of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in December 2001, the United Kingdom has been a key contributor: we have maintained a continuous presence in Kabul where our troops have once again established a high reputation. That useful work has been complemented by our provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in Mazar-e Sharif, currently operating under the command of the coalition across the five provinces of Balkh, Faryab, Jowzjan, Samangan and Sar-e Pol. No-one should doubt the United Kingdom's commitment to Afghanistan.

The United Nations Security Council resolution 1510 authorized ISAF to expand beyond Kabul and offered the opportunity to start to bring the ISAF and the PRTs together. Since December 2003, NATO has operated its own PRT in the north-eastern city of Konduz as part of ISAF. Building on that experience, and that of coalition PRTs, NATO's detailed operational planning to expand the ISAF across Afghanistan is nearing completion. In view of the parliamentary recess I believe the House would wish to be informed of developments that are likely to occur shortly.

Within this planning, and in conjunction with our international partners, we have offered to NATO to lead the expansion process in the north of the country, where we already have a significant presence through our own PRT. As part of our expanded commitment, and once NATO has agreed its operational plan we shall lead a second multinational PRT that we intend to establish in the Northern city of Meymaneh. Again, in co-operation with our international partners, we shall establish and maintain facilities to support PRTs across the North of Afghanistan. Finally, we plan to transfer command of the PRT in Mazar-e Sharif from the coalition to the ISAF.

This will require some increase in the number of British troops routinely deployed in Afghanistan, although until negotiations with our international partners are complete I am not in a position to indicate what the precise total will be, but I will keep the House informed as this develops. I can confirm, however, that this commitment, which will utilise forces allocated to but not deployed forward in Afghanistan and some other enabling elements in the initial stages, is sustainable.

The expansion of the ISAF will be a major challenge. The United Kingdom, in line with our determination to help the Afghan people rebuild their country, is resolved to play its full part in meeting that challenge. By leading expansion in the north we shall do so in a sustainable and effective manner to the long-term benefit of Afghanistan and her people.

Chemical Protection Programme

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): The UK's chemical protection programme is designed to protect against the use of chemical weapons. Such a programme is permitted by the chemical weapons convention, with which the United Kingdom is fully compliant. Under the terms of the convention, we

are required to provide information annually to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In accordance with the Government's commitment to openness, I am placing in the House of Commons Library a copy of the summary that has been provided to the organisation outlining the UK's chemical protection programme for 2004.

NATO Response Forces

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): From mid-July 2004, the United Kingdom's routine Destroyer or Frigate (DD/FF) contribution to the standing element of the NATO Response Force (NRF) will be a single ship. This replaces our previous commitment of two—one to Standing Force Atlantic and one to the Standing Force Mediterranean. We have also given greater priority to enduring additional commitments in the Arabian Gulf.

When, from July 2004 until June 2005, the UK fulfils the role of High Readiness Force Commander (Maritime), we will provide a broad range of maritime capability to the NRF. When this duty passes to another nation, UK will revert to our routine commitment of 1 DD/FF.

TREASURY

"Review of Statistics for Economic Policy Making"

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): Christopher Allsopp's final report "The Review of Statistics for Economic Policy Making" is published today. Copies are available in the Vote Office and the Library of the House.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 1 April 2004

TRANSPORT

Road Safety Strategy

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Jamieson): The Government's road safety strategy *"Tomorrow's roads—safer for everyone"* published in March 2000 included a commitment to evaluate every three years progress on delivery of the strategy and towards meeting the 2010 casuaity reduction targets.

The first three-year review has been conducted by the Department, in consultation with the Road Safety Advisory Panel, which includes many of the key stakeholders both within and outside Government. I intend to publish the outcome of the review on 7 April 2004 to coincide with World Health Day 2004, the theme of which is the global road safety challenge. Copies of the review report will be placed in the Library of the House.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Jamieson): I am pleased to announce the Ministerial Targets for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency for 2004–05. I will place in the House Library, shortly, a copy of the Agency's Business Plan and Forward Look, which includes its Ministerial targets for 2004–05. The Ministerial targets are:

In at least 96 per cent. of incidents, within 5 minutes of being alerted, take a decision on the appropriate search and rescue response and initiate action if necessary;

Deliver at least 97 per cent. of planned ship inspections, and ensure that 95 per cent. of mandatory expanded ship inspections are carried out;

Approve ship security plans and undertake verifications of all applicable UK registered cargo ships;

Establish a baseline for seafarer satisfaction levels;

Develop a robust statistical base and design a system, which will allow the Agency to measure accurately the impact of its incident prevention activity;

Ensure that no more than 3 per cent. of UK ships inspected under the Paris Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) arrangements are detained, and also ensure that the UK Shipping Register maintains a position on the Paris MOU White List which is comparable to registers of a similar size and reputation.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Independent Police Complaints Commission

The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears): I am pleased to announce the launch of the Independent Police Complaints Commission, which has now replaced the Police Complaints Authority. It will operate under the powers and duties provided to it by the Police Reform Act 2002. Under the Chairmanship of Nick Hardwick, it is responsible for the effective and efficient running of the police complaints system.

The IPCC has its headquarters in London, and also has a regional presence in Manchester, Leicester, and Cardiff.

As guardian of the complaints system, the IPCC alongside the police service and others will undertake a vital role in maintaining public confidence in the integrity and accountability of the police service.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Local Authority Fees 2004–05

The Minister for the Environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): Charges to cover the costs of local enforcing authorities in regulating processes which are subject to Part I of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (Local Air Pollution Control (LAPC)) were introduced in April 1991. Interim charges for installations which are subject to the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 (Local Air Pollution Prevention and Control (LAPPC) and Local Authority—Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (LA-IPPC)) were introduced in August 2000.

With the approval of the Treasury to the extent required, and following consultation with local authority associations and industry, myself with my right hon. Friend, the Minister for Sustainable Food and Farming have made revised schemes in respect of the Environmental Protection Act England and Wales and in respect of the Pollution Prevention and Control Act. The schemes specify the scale of fees and charges to take effect from 1 April 2004.

There will be a 2.75 per cent. increase to the LAPC, LAPPC and the LA-IPPC fees and charges schemes for 2004–05. One of the factors taken into account was the take-up of cost accounting by local authorities which, when fully adopted, should provide the evidence of the adequacy or otherwise of current charging levels. According to my Department's statistics, 66 per cent. of local authorities had adopted cost accounting practices for LAPC by 31 March 2003, compared with 51 per cent. by the same date in 2002. A further 19 per cent. had said they intended to introduce cost accounting by the end of 2003–04, while the remaining 15 per cent. have no stated plans to do so.

There will also be an additional fee spread over the 18,000 regulated activities, amounting to approximately £2/3 per standard activity. This is required to cover the £40,000 necessary to recover the costs of the Environment Agency's technical unit which provides guidance notes for use by local authorities and operators and is funded under the scheme.

The schemes will be laid before both Houses and copies placed in the Libraries.

Farm Animal Welfare Report

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): In June 2003, the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) published its report and recommendations on the welfare of farmed animals at

slaughter. It was a valuable and comprehensive report and I am grateful to the council for the work they put into it.

The report contains 94 recommendations for improvements in the welfare of animals at the time of slaughter or killing and the Government are prepared to accept, or partially accept, the majority of them. But the Government also accept that FAWC's recommendation to ban the slaughter of animals without prior stunning on welfare grounds has been contentious for the Jewish and Muslim communities.

The Government also recognise that such a ban would be likely to result in kosher and halal meat being imported with no overall improvement in animal welfare. We also think that there is a strong possibility that a legal challenge to a ban on slaughter without prior stunning would succeed on the grounds that the practice is protected under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights.

While the Government therefore propose to reject the FAWC recommendation to ban slaughter without prior stunning, we recommend that cattle slaughtered by having their throats cut should receive an immediate post-cut stun because of the time it takes cattle to lose consciousness This should be progressed on a voluntary basis.

In addition to the issues identified by FAWC, the consultation provides an ideal opportunity for a debate on whether meat from animals slaughtered without prior stunning for the kosher and halal markets should be labelled voluntarily. Some meat that has been slaughtered without the animal previously being stunned finds its way onto the ordinary meat market. At present, such meat is not required to be labelled to indicate the method of slaughter.

We are today issuing our response to the FAWC report for consultation on all aspects including those identified in this statement.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Land Registry

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. David Lammy): My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor has today set the following key performance targets for Her Majesty's Land Registry for 2004–05.

HER MAJESTY'S LAND REGISTRY KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS 2004–05*

KPI Target	*2003–04*	*KPI Achievement (@ 6/2/04)*	*2004–05*
Customer Service—Speed			
Percentage of office copy and official search applications processed within two working days.	98%	100%	98%
Percentage of all registrations processed within 20 working days.	80%	88%	80%
Accuracy			
Percentage of registrations processed free of any error.	98.5%	98.8%	98.5%
Overall Satisfaction			
Percentage of customers who, overall, are very satisfied/satisfied with the full range of services provided by Land Registry.	Better than 94	98.7%	Better than 95
Financial			
Percentage return on average capital employed.	6%	6%	3.5%
Efficiency			
Cost per unit in:			
cash terms	£29.08	£27.23	£28.98
(real terms)	(£22.17)	(£20.55)	(£21.43)

Critical Action Points

2003–04	*Outcome @ 6/2/2004*
Start pilot implementation for e-Discharges.	Achieved.
Make all key Land Registry information services available over the Internet.	Title Plans not yet available online.
Implement the Land Registration Act 2002.	Achieved.
Report to Ministers on proposals for e-conveyancing service and procurement strategy	Submission forwarded on 27 February 2004.
2004–05	
Customer Service: Enable printing of authenticated results of Official Searches and Copies in a customer's office.	
Land Registration: Carry out consultation on a standard form of lease.	
Electronic Service Delivery: Start the pilot for processing e-lodgement of forms.	
Make Land Registry data available to the EULIS demonstrator.	

DEFENCE

Reservists (Former Yugoslavia)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): A new call-out order has been made under Section 56 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 so that reservists may continue to be called-out into permanent service to support military operations in the former Yugoslavia. The order will take effect from 1 April 2004.

At present, some 300 Reservists are serving in the former Yugoslavia. They are providing a wide range of individual skills as well as a composite signals squadron. We do not expect to have to mobilise any Reservists compulsorily for this particular deployment and we are most grateful for their continuing support to an important stabilisation operation.

Veterans Agency

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): The key targets that have been set for the Chief Executive of the Veterans Agency (VA) for the financial year 2004–05 are as follows:

Service

Key Target 1: To issue decisions on claims to war pensions in an average of no more than 63 working days. This represents a cumulative improvement of 38 per cent. against our 2000–01 baseline level of 100 working days.

Key Target 2: To issue decisions on war widows claims in an average of no more than 25 working days. This represents a cumulative improvement of 31 per cent. against our 2000–01 baseline level of 36 working days.

Key Target 3: To achieve an externally validated claims accuracy rate of at least 97 per cent.

Key Target 4: To achieve an externally validated medical adjudication accuracy rate of at least 95 per cent.

Valuing our people

Key Target 5: To undergo a successful, externally managed IiP re-assessment exercise by June 2004.

Working in Partnership

Key Target 6: To work with the Department for Constitutional Affairs' Court Service to reduce the average time it takes an appeal to pass through the war pensions appeals process. By 31 March 2005 the average time should reduce to no more than 240 working days. This is an improvement of 10 working days on our 2003–04 target; and it represents a cumulative improvement of 57 per cent. against our 2000–01 baseline level of 565 working days.

Efficiency

Key Target 7: To use the Agency output costing methodology developed in 2002–03 to help identify and generate such administrative efficiencies and other savings as will enable the Agency to achieve a 3 per cent. reduction in 2004–05 against its 2003–04 final out-turn figure.

Deepcut (Surrey Police)

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): On 4 March 2004 the Chief Constable of the Surrey Police published his final report following the completion of the investigation into the deaths of Privates Sean Benton, Cheryl James, Geoff Gray and James Collinson at Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut between 1995 and 2002. At the Chief Constable's request placed copies of the report in the Libraries of both Houses on the same day.

In conducting background research for their report Surrey Police drew considerably on information provided by the Army. I recognise the interest of right hon. and hon. members in these cases placed and I am today arranging for a number of documents mentioned specifically in the report to be in the Library of the House shortly.

These documents have, where appropriate, been expurgated to remove security sensitive material and references to third parties.

We continue to give the Chief Constable's recommendations careful consideration. I expect to a further announcement after the Easter recess.

HEALTH

Clinical Trials Directive

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): We are today laying before Parliament the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004, which will implement into United Kingdom law directive 2001/20 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 April 2001 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the member states relating to the implementation of good clinical practice in the conduct of clinical trials on medicinal products for human use. The regulations will come into force on 1 May 2004, the date by which member states are required to implement the directive.

These regulations will ensure that the rights, safety and well-being of clinical trial subjects are protected by requiring sponsors of trials to be responsible for designing, conducting, recording and reporting clinical trials according to principles of good clinical practice derived from the principles set out in the amended 1964 Declaration of Helsinki. In addition, the regulations will further protect public health by ensuring that the results of clinical trials are collected, recorded and analysed in accordance with internationally recognised principles so that they can be audited and verified before being used to impact on public health, for example through a publication that changes medical prescribing practice or as evidence to support applications to place medicines on the market.

The Regulations will provide a statutory basis for:

standardisation of procedures for ethical and competent authority consideration and authorisation;

good clinical practice (GCP) standards for commencing and conducting clinical trials;

good manufacturing practice (GMP) standards for medicines used in clinical trials; and

inspections against internationally accepted principles and standards of GCP and GMP, supported by enforcement powers.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Department of Health will be publishing guidance on the new procedures which the regulations will implement from 1 May 2004. This will cover applications for clinical trial authorisations, inspections, ethics committee applications, informed consent for incapacitated adults and sponsorship of clinical trials.

The Government have undertaken extensive consultation with stakeholders in both the pharmaceutical industry and the non-commercial clinical trials sector on how to implement the Directive. Where possible, concerns expressed by the non-commercial sector, in particular, about the possible regulatory burden have been taken into account in the UK Regulations. Furthermore, the MHRA and Department of Health have been working with stakeholders to help them comply with the practical requirements of the regulations. The Government believe that the regulations achieve a proper balance by safeguarding the rights of patients involved in clinical trials while avoiding a disproportionate impact on those who carry out clinical trials.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Pathways to Work

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Andrew Smith): The Department of Work and Pensions laid before the house on 18 November 2002 a consultation document entitled: "Pathways to Work—Helping People into Employment", (Cm 5690). This outlined a range of proposals to provide more effective support to people with health conditions and disabled people. The Pathways to Work are at the leading edge of international best practice on the help and support that is on offer for people whose job prospects are affected by a health condition or disability. In a recent economic survey by the OECD, Pathways to Work has been described as a "radically new approach to dealing with those on incapacity benefits".

On 27 October, I announced the launch of the first three pilots—Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taf; Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Argyll & Bute; and Derbyshire. I know there has been considerable interest in these groundbreaking reforms and I wish to update colleagues on progress in the first three pilots.

To date, the specially trained personal advisers we have put in place have carried out over 3,000 Work Focused Interviews with promising results. Many customers are, as we believed; keen to actively consider a return to work and positive about the help on offer. They are keen to participate in the NDDP Programmes and NHS Condition Management Programmes. By mid-March, well over 400 customers had been referred to NDDP Programmes and in the first few weeks of operation, around 130 people had been referred to Condition Management Programmes. The Return to Work Credit of £40 a week is also proving a popular incentive, with approximately 700 awards made, helping incapacity benefits recipients make that final step back into work. Furthermore, there are over 700 longer-term recipients who have volunteered to work with an adviser to try and find a job. These figures are drawn from management reports and are provisional—validated statistics are expected to be available from May. With over 700 people helped back to work and off benefits, these pilots are already changing many people's lives. One such example is from Tonypandy, where a client who had been claiming Incapacity Benefit since 1978 due to a back problem and depression, with the support from her Personal Adviser, and help from Return to Work Credit, Adviser Discretion Fund, Tax Credits and New Deal 50+, started work as a Production Operator after 25 years on benefits.

On 5 June, I announced the locations of the final four pilots—East Lancashire, Essex, Gateshead & South Tyneside and Somerset.

My Department, together with the Department of Health have been preparing for the implementation of these pilots.

In the Budget we also announced the expansion of the specialist Personal Adviser service to more actively support some longer-term IB recipients. We will also be introducing a new financial incentive to support customers as they undertake return to work activity.

Today, I am pleased to announce that these pilots will be launched on 5 April.

The pilots are to run until 2006 and the impact of the extra support will be fully evaluated before decisions are made about extending the measures.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Arm's Length Management Organisations

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): I am today confirming funding of £473.4 million for 2004–05 and 2005–06 for the eight Arm's Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) set up under Round 1 of the ALMO programme. The ALMOs in Ashfield, Derby, Hounslow, Kirklees, Rochdale, Stockton-on-Tees, Westminster and Wigan have made excellent progress. Tenants are benefiting from improvements to their homes and an enhanced housing management service. All the Round 1 ALMOs have achieved ratings of at least two stars from the Housing Inspectorate, with three (Ashfield, Derby and Westminster) achieving three stars.

Following a detailed assessment of the ALMOs' costs and their other sources of income, and taking account of the need to maximise efficiency, I have approved the allocations for 2004–06 shown in the table below. This will keep the ALMOs on track to achieve the decent homes target.

Round 1 ALMO	*Number of tenanted units (2001)*	*ALMO allocation 2002–04*	*ALMO allocation 2004–06*
Ashfield	8,288	£24.0m	£22.1m
Derby	15,424	£31.1m	£66.0m
Hounslow	14,801	£35.0m	£64.7m
Kirklees	28,269	£62.5m	£87.3m
Rochdale	17,227	£24.2m	£82.1m
Stockton	14,060	£44.5m	£18.5m
Westminster	13,500	£20.3m	£53.7m
Wigan	26,446	£58.3m	£79.0m
TOTAL	137,619	£299.9m	£473.4m

TREASURY

EU Enlargement (Tobacco Products)

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Healey): I am today laying regulations confirming the introduction of quantitative restrictions on travellers bringing tobacco products from those new EU member states taking advantage of a derogation allowing them to delay meeting minimum duty levels on certain tobacco products.

The restrictions will apply from 1 May to the following:

cigarettes bought duty-paid in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia;

manufactured tobacco products[1] bought duty-paid in the Czech Republic; and

smoking tobacco[2] bought duty-paid in Estonia.

Where new member states take advantage of the derogation, existing member states are entitled to maintain the same restrictions on the import of cigarettes and some other tobacco products bought in those countries for a traveller's own use, as are currently applied to travellers arriving from third countries, including the new member states.

The Excise Duty Points (Etc.)(New Member States) Regulations 2004, the Customs and Excise Duties (Travellers' Allowances and Personal Reliefs) Order 2004 and the Channel Tunnel (Alcoholic Liquor and Tobacco Products)(Amendment) Order 2004 allow the UK to maintain these restrictions.

After Accession on May 1, travellers to the UK bringing in tobacco products from the countries covered by the regulations will be restricted, as they are currently, to a limit of 200 cigarettes, or, in the case of Estonia, to a limit of 200 cigarettes or 250 grams of smoking tobacco; or, in the case of the Czech Republic, to a limit of 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 100 cigarillos or 250 grams of smoking tobacco.

While the EU minimum duty rates are not met, uncertainties over the impact of EU Enlargement on excise smuggling and cross-border shopping are also heightened.

The Government will therefore review both the operational and principled justification for retention of quantitive restrictions after 12 months in light of developments in smuggling and shopping patterns, and in light of progress made by the new member states to comply with the minimum duty levels.

Customs and Excise has plans in place to explain the restrictions to the travel industry and general public.

[1] Manufactured tobacco products includes cigars, cigarillos and smoking tobacco.

[2] Smoking tobacco is hand rolling tobacco (HRT) and pipe tobacco.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Cyprus

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): I would like to inform the House of developments in relation to Cyprus.

Following the breakdown of settlement negotiations in The Hague in March 2003, the UN Secretary-General made a report to the Security Council. In this report Kofi Annan announced that his proposal for a comprehensive Cyprus settlement (the Annan Plan) remained on the table. However, he added that he did not propose to take any further initiatives unless and until such time as he was given solid reason to believe that the Necessary political will existed for a successful outcome.

The Secretary-General went on to say that he believed it would be a great step Backward if the plan were simply to wither away. He believed that a solution on the basis of the plan could be achieved only if there was an unequivocally stated preparedness on the part of the leaders of both sides, fully and determinedly backed at the highest level in both motherlands, to commit themselves *(a)* to finalise the plan (without reopening its basic principles or essential trade-offs) by a specific date with United Nations assistance, and *(b)* to put it to separate simultaneous referendums as provided for in the plan on a date certain soon hereafter.

The United Kingdom shared this approach and continued to work with its EU and US partners in support of UN efforts to keep the plan on the table and to encourage the parties to Remonstrate the necessary political will to re-engage.

The elections in north Cyprus on 14 December 2003 marked a turning point. The Turkish Cypriots voiced their resounding support for the pro-settlement, pro-EU parties and in doing so gave popular expression to a growing desire from the Turkish Cypriot community to work for an early settlement of the Cyprus problem in order to allow a reunited Cyprus to join the EU on 1 May 2004. Encouraged by the attitude of the Turkish Cypriots and aware of the potential positive impact a Cyprus settlement would have on its own EU aspirations, the JVKP government in Ankara led by Prime Minister Erdogan signalled its own willingness to tje-engage and work constructively for a settlement.

The parties (the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, Greece and Turkey) were therefore invited to New York by the Secretary-General on 4 February 2004 in order to resume negotiations towards a settlement on the basis of the Annan Plan. On 13 February, following an initial round of discussions, the Secretary-General announced that the parties had agreed to resume talks on the basis of the Annan Plan and had committed themselves to a three phase process leading to a finalised plan being submitted to simultaneous, separate referendums on 24 April

The 13 February agreement was a landmark achievement. The parties had committed themselves to a strict timetable and a negotiation process which led inexorably towards simultaneous referendums on a pre-determined date on the basis of a settlement plan which, absent agreement between the parties (including, in the final stage, Greece and Turkey) would be finalised by the Secretary-General himself. Negotiations between the two sides resumed in Cyprus on 19 February. In parallel to the main political level negotiations between the leaders of the two communities, technical committees started to work through the whole range of laws and administrative texts and practical arrangements necessary to give effect to the new state of affairs.

During this phase of the negotiations, our High Commissioner in Nicosia informed the UN that the UK's earlier offer to the UN of giving up roughly half of the territory of the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus remained valid, subject to some small changes in the map. The land to be ceded to the United Cyprus Republic would not in any way compromise the operational capabilities of the bases themselves. The UN confirmed that the UK's offer would be very

valuable in taking forward the adjustments to the territory of the two new constituent states. The UK's offer has been incorporated in the UN's map for the new Cyprus.

On 24 March, the negotiations moved to Buergenstock, Switzerland, where the UN and the parties were joined by Greece and Turkey in a final push for a negotiated settlement agreed between the parties themselves. The UK attended in its capacity as a Guarantor Power in order to assist the efforts of the UN Secretary-General's Good Offices Mission. The European Commissioner for Enlargement, Gunter Verheugen, also attended for the final days.

On 29 March the Secretary-General presented the parties with a revised plan. This revision was produced following extensive consultation and aimed to strike a balanced compromise, building on the earlier version of the Annan Plan which had been presented to the parties in February 2003, and taking subsequent developments and both sides' views carefully into account. Following a further final round of meetings between the Secretary-General, the parties and Greece and Turkey, Kofi Annan called the parties together late on 31 March. Announcing that the time for negotiation and consultation was over, and that the time for decision and action had arrived, the Secretary-General presented the parties and the Guarantor Powers (Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom) with his finalised plan—Annan IV—for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

In his remarks, Kofi Annan said that the Plan was inevitably a compromise. It did not satisfy everyone's demands. But he believed that it met the core interests, and addressed the key concerns, of people on both sides. He added that the choice was not between the Plan and some other mythical solution. In reality, the choice was between the settlement on offer or no settlement at all. The Government shares this view.

No one is under any illusion about what remains to be done. No one is saying that reunification will be easy. But the plan is balanced and fair, and offers all Cypriots the chance of a better future as citizens of a United Cyprus Republic within the European Union. The Government believes strongly that this is a chance that must not be squandered.

The final decision will now be taken by the Cypriots themselves in separate, simultaneous referendums to be held on 24 April.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 15 March 2004

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Community Transport Fund (Essex)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many passenger journeys were delivered in a typical month for each of the Community Transport Fund's projects in Essex [160105]

Alun Michael: The purpose of these projects is to test out a variety of approaches to improving access to transport in rural areas. Passenger journeys per month from the four schemes able to provide information are as follows:

Family Support Clacton—average 200 passenger journeys per month

Chelmsford Dial A Ride—average 209 passenger journeys per month

Family Support Brightlingsea—average 460 passenger journeys per month

Epping Forest CVS Project—average of 470 passenger journeys per month.

The other projects are a mixture of research work, driver and volunteer recruitment and lift sharing schemes, or have not yet made any passenger journey figures available to the Countryside Agency.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what options are open to *(a)* Essex County Council and *(b)* Castle Point Borough Council for the provision of community and welfare transport for (i) disabled and (ii) elderly people in Castle Point when the current funding scheme expires in April 2005. [160106]

Alun Michael: Following changes to the regulations which will be complete by 1 April 2004, local authorities will be able to support the full range of community and other transport schemes for the disabled and elderly from their own resources, for example, revenue support grant, rural bus subsidy grants and Local Transport Plan funding.

The Countryside Agency's Rural Transport Partnership scheme has proved very successful in showing what can be achieved through local engagement. In the short space of three years it has raised the profile of rural transport issues and shown how much can be achieved by taking an innovative and flexible approach. We look to local authorities to build on this from their mainstream resources.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many bids under the Community Transport Fund in Essex have been *(a)* granted and *(b)* rejected; and if she will make a statement. [160107]

Alun Michael: The Rural Transport Partnership grant scheme is run by the Countryside Agency on behalf of Defra. In Essex 10 bids were awarded grants and one bid was rejected between April 2001 to February 2004.

Unsurfaced Roads

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what discussions she has had with Her Majesty's Royal Engineers on the maintenance of unsurfaced roads when drafting the consultation paper Use of Mechanically Propelled Vehicles on Rights of Way; and what plans she has to do so during the consultation; [159714]

(2) on what basis her Department decided to reduce the time for the classification of highways to one year; [159715]

(3) how much the Highways Agency has spent on the maintenance of unsurfaced byways *(a)* in 2003–04 and *(b)* over the last decade; [159716]

(4) how much recreational traffic on unsurfaced roads has changed in the last decade; [159717]

(5) what *(a)* evidence her Department has collated and *(b)* investigations it has carried out, on (i) the level of motorcycle use of unsealed roads and (ii) the extent of the damage this has caused; [159718]

(6) whether her Department examined the Hierarchy of Trail Routes in the Lake District National Park and how the scheme could apply to the maintenance of unsurfaced roads when drafting the consultation paper Use of Mechanically Propelled Vehicles on Rights of Way. [159719]

Alun Michael: As set out in the recent consultation paper "The use of mechanically propelled vehicles on rights of way," I consider it inappropriate and unsustainable that historic evidence of use by horse-drawn vehicles or dedications for vehicular use at a time before the internal combustion engine existed can give rise to rights to use modern mechanically propelled vehicles. I have proposed that this should no longer be the case, but that a period of one year might be allowed for the recording of byways open to all traffic based on such evidence. I will consider carefully the responses to these proposals.

As explained in the consultation paper, we intend to revise the advice andguidance on managing the different sorts of traffic on vehicular rights of way in the publication "Making the Best of Byways (1997)". In doing so, we will examine the Hierarchy of Trail Routes in the Lake District National Park and how a similar approach might improve the management of unsurfaced roads elsewhere. We will also look at various techniques for maintaining unsurfaced roads, including those used by Her Majesty's Royal Engineers, which have been applied with some success on the Ridgeway National Trail. The consultation paper invites views on any other ways in which "Making the Best of Byways" might be revised.

Local highway authorities are responsible for maintaining rights of way, not the Highways Agency. Information on how much these authorities have spent on the maintenance of unsurfaced byways could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

We are currently conducting a year-long study of a representative sample of byways open to all traffic, to collect evidence of the level of use of these ways by mechanically propelled vehicles and their surface condition. What is important and what we want to establish, is not how much the volume of traffic has changed, but what it is now and whether it is sustainable.

Batteries

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of used batteries was recycled in the UK in 2003. [159097]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* Latest figures (2002) show that 87 per cent. of automotive lead acid batteries in the UK were sent for recycling. The UK has one recycling plant for automotive lead acid batteries. Around 1 per cent. of portable batteries collected in UK are sent to France for recycling.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how her Department is working to ensure that the UK fulfils its obligation under EU law to recycle 45 per cent.of batteries each year. [159098]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* Proposals for a new Batteries Directive have only recently been seen and are yet to be negotiated in Europe. As a result, there is currently no EU law that stipulates a target for the collection of batteries. The proposals outline targets for collection of portable batteries of 160 grams per inhabitant per annum. For the UK, this equates to around 45 per cent. of batteries put on the market.

At present, the UK is collecting less than 1 per cent. of household batteries. In anticipation of a collection target, both Defra and the DTI are in talks with those stakeholders affected by the proposal and are looking at ways to secure early participation. This will enable the UK to successfully meet a target for collection within a given timeframe. In addition, both Departments are fully involved in discussions with the European Commission and the European Parliament, to ensure that targets for the collection and recycling of household batteries are challenging but achievable.

GM Crops

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what provision she has made to ensure that Chardon LL maize will not be added to the National Seed List before arrangements have been made to restrict herbicide use on this crop in accordance with the advice of the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment and English Nature. [160226]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the statement made to the House by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on Tuesday 9 March 2004.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether Chardon LL fodder maize has a greater value for cultivation and use than the conventional varieties from which it was bred. [160571]

Mr. Morley: The value for cultivation and use of Chardon LL has not been compared with that of its parental lines or the equivalent non-GM variety. The criterion for addition to the UK National List is that it should, taking its qualities as a whole, represent a clear improvement compared with other forage maize varieties already on the UK List. Chardon has been assessed on this basis and found to meet the performance standards set to indicate a clear improvement.

Nappies

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how her Department is working with the *(a)* Department of Trade and Industry and *(b)* retail industry in order to promote the stocking of cotton nappies in order to give parents the choice of types. [159095]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* It is for individual retailers to decide on the products that they stock.

I believe there is a wide range of re-usable nappies available both from local suppliers and through the internet. National retailers also stock re-usable nappies.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff were employed in *(a)* her Department and *(b)* each of the non-departmental public bodies for which her Department is responsible in each of the last 10 years. [160589]

Alun Michael: Defra was created on 8 June 2001 so I can only respond in respect of the period since that date. The figures given refer to that period.

(a) The number of permanent staff in the core department and each Agency is set out in the following table:

	October 2001	*April 2002*	*April 2003*
Defra	7,970	6,980	6,690
Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science	480	500	530
Central Science Laboratory	580	610	650
Pesticides Safety Directorate	190	180	170
Rural Payments Agency[1]	—	2,940	2,870
Veterinary Laboratories Agency	1,160	1,230	1,290
Veterinary Medicines Directorate	110	120	120
Intervention Board Executive Agency	1,080	—	—
Total	11,570	12,560	12,320

[1] The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) was created on 16 October 2001, and took over the functions and staff of the IBEA on 15 November 2001.

(b) Defra currently has responsibility for 18 executive non-departmental public bodies, 32 advisory bodies, 4 tribunals and 2 public corporations. The following table shows the number of staff employed in the public corporations and executive NDPBs; the advisory and tribunal NDPBs do not employ their own staff.

	2001	*2002*	*2003*
Public corporations			
British Waterways Board	1,929	1,929	2,063
Covent Garden Market Authority	39	39	40
Executive NDPBs			
Agricultural Wages Board for England and Wales	0	0	0
Agricultural Wages Committees for England and Wales	0	0	0
Apple and Pear Research Council[1]	0.5	1	—
British Potato Council	62	63	63
Countryside Agency	509.15	631.5	625.4
English Nature	783.5	825	1,030
Environment Agency	10,476	10,595	10,595
Food from Britain	26	26	26
Home-Grown Cereals Authority	43.5	47.3	50
Horticultural Development Council	15	13.5	12
Horticulture Research International	567	502.5	484
Joint Nature Conservation Committee	82	100	101
Meat and Livestock Commission	678	666	666
Milk Development Council	9	14	14
National Forest Company	15.5	17	17
Regional Flood Defence Committees	0	0	0
Royal Botanic Gardens Kew	551	601	601
Sea Fish Industry Authority	147	145	145
United Kingdom Register of Organic Food Standards[2]	7	7	7
Wine Standards Board	10.5	10.5	10.5
Total	15,951	16,233	16,550

[1] Wound up 31 March 2003.
[2] Wound up 18 July 2003.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Solicitor-General how many prosecutions have been brought by the Crown Prosecution Service for breach of an anti-social behaviour order in each of the last five years. [159689]

The Solicitor-General: Information on anti-social behaviour orders is collated by the Home Office, and is available for the period from June 2000 to December 2002. During this period, 329 persons were prosecuted for breach of an anti-social behaviour order, 305 of whom were found guilty.

Law Officers' Advice

Llew Smith: To ask the Solicitor-General for what reasons it is Government policy never to make public legal advice prepared by the Attorney-General for Ministers. [158111]

The Solicitor-General: There is a long-standing convention, adhered to by successive governments, and reflected in paragraph 24 of the Ministerial Code, that neither the fact that the Law Officers have advised on a particular matter, nor the substance of any advice they may have given is publicly disclosed. As I explained to the hon. Member in my reply to him of 26 March 2003, *Official Report*, column 236W, the purpose of the convention is to enable the Government to obtain frank and full legal advice in confidence. This is in the public interest so that governments take full and frank legal advice and act in accordance with the rule of law.

Discontinued Prosecutions

Mr. Battle: To ask the Solicitor-General how many cases brought before the Crown Prosecution Service by the police were dropped and not proceeded with, and for what reasons, in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [159506]

The Solicitor-General: The relevant figures are summarised in the following two tables.

Table 1 shows the number of cases not proceeded with in the magistrates' courts. These comprise both cases discontinued by the Crown Prosecution Service and those written off because the defendant could not be traced by the police, had died or been found unfit to plead. Table 1 also shows the number of cases in which a prosecution proceeded and was completed in the magistrates' courts. These comprise cases in which the defendant: was convicted after trial; convicted after a guilty plea; or convicted in their absence. It also consists of cases dismissed by the magistrates after a full trial or a submission of no case to answer; or cases discharged during the course of a committal hearing.

The table also shows the number and proportion of cases resulting in a conviction and the number and proportion resulting in an unsuccessful outcome. Unsuccessful outcomes comprise cases which did not proceed, and those cases which did proceed but which resulted in a dismissal or discharge.

Table 2 shows the number of cases not proceeded with in the crown court. These comprise cases dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service before a jury was sworn and written off because the defendant could not be traced by the police, had died, or been found unfit to plead.

Table 2 also shows the number of cases in which a prosecution proceeded. These comprise cases in which the defendant was convicted after trial or guilty plea; and cases which resulted in an acquittal by the jury, or on the judge's direction.

Table 2 also shows the number and proportion of cases resulting in a conviction at the crown court and those cases which resulted in an unsuccessful outcome, including cases that did not proceed and those which resulted in an acquittal.

The Crown Prosecution Service holds no historical records showing why cases did not proceed: the information is held on individual case files, and could be retrieved only by examining every relevant file in each Crown Prosecution Service office.

The decision whether to proceed with a case is taken in accordance with the criteria set out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. The code states that a case should only start or continue if there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction and, if there is sufficient evidence, where it is in the public interest to proceed. Where there is sufficient evidence, a prosecution will usually take place unless public interest considerations against prosecution clearly outweigh those in favour. The code is applied in every case. Where the criteria are not met, then the decision to discontinue is in the interests of justice.

Together with its criminal justice partners, the Crown Prosecution Service is subject to a Public Service Agreement target of increasing the number of offences for which an offender is brought to justice. The service, therefore, seeks to reduce both cases which do not proceed and those which result in an unsuccessful outcome.

A number of initiatives contribute towards this aim. The Crown Prosecution Service has re-structured its front line operations by establishing co-located units in which prosecutors and caseworkers work in partnership with the police to prepare and strengthen cases, focusing resources on more serious cases and providing better support to victims and witnesses. In addition, the service is implementing the recommendations of Sir Robin Auld that they should assume responsibility for determining charges from the outset of the case. The implementation of the Compass Case Management system will provide the Crown Prosecution Service with better information on the progress and outcome of proceedings, allowing managers to identify areas of excellence and areas in which performance requires remedial action. Over time this will include information about the reasons underlying case failures.

Table 1: Cases dropped and cases proceeded with: magistrates' courts

	1997		1998		1999		2000	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Not proceeded with								
Discontinued	184,208	15.0	187,575	14.8	191,341	15.0	191,579	15.7
Written off	92,930	7.6	88,506	7.0	86,056	6.7	78,001	6.4
Total not proceeded with	277,138	22.6	276,081	21.8	277,397	21.7	269,580	22.0
Proceeded with								
Guilty pleas	766,836	62.5	810,952	63.9	820,741	64.3	781,254	63.8
Proved in the absence of the defendant	108,831	8.9	114,133	9.0	114,880	9.0	116,032	9.5
Convictions after trial	53,235	4.3	49,466	3.9	45,108	3.5	39,331	3.2
Discharged at committal	1,711	0.1	922	0.1	799	0.1	852	0.1
Dismissed no case to answer	2,775	0.2	2,248	0.2	1,884	0.1	1,752	0.1
Dismissed after trial	15,548	1.3	15,442	1.2	14,909	1.2	14,876	1.2
Total proceeded with	948,936	77.4	993,163	78.2	998,321	78.3	954,097	78.0
Total convictions	928,902	75.8	974,551	76.8	980,729	76.9	936,677	76.5
Total unsuccessful outcomes	297,172	24.2	294,693	23.2	294,989	23.1	287,060	23.5

	2001		2002		2003	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Not proceeded with						
Discontinued	198,908	16.2	197,940	15.7	181,161	14.4
Written off	73,790	6.0	78,758	6.3	73,421	5.8
Total not proceeded with	272,698	22.1	276,698	22.0	254,582	20.2
Proceeded with						
Guilty pleas	786,380	63.9	803,859	63.9	796,973	63.1
Proved in the absence of the defendant	117,882	9.6	119,659	9.5	143,838	11.4
Convictions after trial	37,167	3.0	39,516	3.1	46,813	3.7
Discharged at committal	766	0.1	931	0.1	1,689	0.1
Dismissed no case to answer	1,632	0.1	1,722	0.1	2,565	0.2
Dismissed after trial	14,645	1.2	15,458	1.2	15,844	1.3
Total proceeded with	958,472	77.9	981,145	78.0	1,007,722	79.8
Total convictions	947,429	76.5	963,034	76.6	987,624	78.2
Total unsuccessful outcomes	289,747	23.5	294,809	23.4	274,680	21.8

Table 2: Cases dropped and cases proceeded with: crown court

	1997		1998		1999		2000	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Not proceeded with								
Judge ordered acquittals	8,886	8.3	10,247	10.9	10,828	12.2	11,529	13.4
Written off	1,254	1.2	1,404	1.5	1,431	1.6	1,328	1.5
Total not proceeded with	10,140	9.5	11,651	12.4	12,259	13.9	12,857	15.0
Proceeded with								
Guilty pleas	74,398	69.8	61,863	65.8	55,705	63.0	53,449	62.3
Convictions after trial	13,266	12.5	11,754	12.5	11,647	13.2	10,959	12.8
Judge directed acquittals	1,740	1.6	1,851	2.0	1,849	2.1	1,789	2.1
Acquittals after trial	6,977	6.5	6,910	7.3	6,958	7.9	6,729	7.8
Total proceeded with	96,381	90.5	82,378	87.6	76,159	86.1	72,926	85.0
Total convictions	87,664	82.3	73,677	78.3	67,352	76.2	64,408	75.1
Total unsuccessful outcomes	18,857	17.7	20,472	21.7	21,066	23.8	21,375	24.9

	2001		2002		2003	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Not proceeded with						
Judge ordered acquittals	12,744	15.2	14,340	15.3	14,869	15.1
Written off	1,445	1.7	1,739	1.9	1,921	1.9
Total not proceeded with	14,189	16.9	16,078	17.2	16,790	17.0
Proceeded with						
Guilty pleas	50,597	60.4	57,024	60.9	60,132	61.0
Convictions after trial	10,803	12.9	12,677	13.5	13,168	13.4
Judge directed acquittals	1,495	1.8	1,442	1.5	1,574	1.6
Acquittals after trial	6,630	7.9	6,402	6.8	6,880	7.0
Total proceeded with	69,525	83.1	77,544	82.8	81,754	83.0
Total convictions	61,400	73.3	69,701	74.4%	73,300	74.4
Total unsuccessful outcomes	22,314	26.7	23,922	25.6	25,244	25.6

Katharine Gun

Llew Smith: To ask the Solicitor-General for what reasons the prosecution against Katharine Gun, in respect of alleged actions she took while employed at GCHQ, was dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service. [157497]

The Solicitor-General: I would refer my hon. Friend to my statement of 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 426–29.

WALES

Business Output

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the level of Welsh business output was for each month of 2003. [157665]

Mr. Touhig: Information on business output is published quarterly.

The latest available figures for 2003 are as follows:

	Figures
QTR 1	92.4
QTR 2	92.3
QTR 3	90.1

Source:
From the Index of Production and Construction. Jointly produced by Statistical Directorate National Assembly for Wales and the ONS.

Ministerial Speeches

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many speeches he made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156106]

Mr. Hain: I have made some 20 speeches during the period in question. These include keynote speeches to the Institute of Welsh Affairs[1], Cardiff Business Club, Wales Industry Forum, Alstom UK Annual Dinner, the Italian Ambassadors luncheon and the State of the Nations[1] lecture for the Constitution Unit.

In addition I have spoken at a number of events such as IPPR breakfast, International Eisteddfod, Salvation Army presentation, British Telecom Broadband presentation and most recently at reception for Japanese business people.

[1] These speeches are on the Wales Office website—www.walesoffice.gov.uk/report.html

TRANSPORT

Computerised MOT Tests

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answers of 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1237–38W, on computerised MOT tests, what benefits were expected prior to tendering, of computerisation of the MOT test; and if he will make a statement on the disadvantages consequent on late delivery of the ordered system. [161497]

Mr. Jamieson: The main benefits of computerising MOT testing are expected to be:

Improved road safety and environmental protection by raising testing standards and enabling increased motorists' compliance with annual testing requirements.

Increased consumer protection by improving the consistency of testing, reducing unnecessary MOT test failures and related repairs.

Reduced crime and fraud by preventing fraudulent or unauthorised issue of test certificates and eliminating forgeries.

Modernised and more efficient administration of the scheme through networking communications enabling real time access to testing information and results, reducing the compliance burden on MOT stations, and enabling delivery of an electronic vehicle relicensing service to motorists.

Late delivery of the computerised service will mean that the current manual procedures will need to be retained for longer than envisaged.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answers of 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1237–38W, on computerised MOT tests, under what circumstances the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency could terminate the contract. [161498]

Mr. Jamieson: VOSA could seek to terminate its contract with Siemens Business Services (SBS):

1. for material default by SBS which is either not capable of remedy or is not remedied within a specified period depending on the breach;

2. if SBS is or is near being insolvent;

3. if SBS undergoes a change of control which is not in VOSA's or DfT's interest;

4. if there are prolonged serious problems as a result of events outside VOSA's or SBS's control and alternative arrangements cannot be agreed.

VOSA may also terminate without cause. In this case it would have to pay compensation to SBS covering its legitimate costs and for some loss of profit.

Rural Bus Services (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many rural bus services in Chorley are funded by rural bus grants. [161533]

Mr. McNulty: Rural Bus Subsidy Grant (RBSG) is paid to local transport authorities. In the case of Chorley this is Lancashire county council. It is for the authority to decide which services should be supported with the grant. We understand from the county council that four rural bus services in Chorley are currently supported by RBSG.

Goods Vehicles

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many closed container vehicles and trailers, including curtain sided ones, are *(a)* registered in and *(b)* operate from the UK; and if he will make a statement. [160326]

Mr. Jamieson: At the end of 2002, there were in total 433,000 goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes gross weight licensed in Great Britain. 101,000 vehicles were specified on standard international licences authorising operators to carry goods on international journeys.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate how many closed container vehicles and trailers, including curtain sided ones, travelled to mainland Europe through *(a)* the Channel tunnel and *(b)* ferry ports in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [160327]

Mr. Jamieson: Information is not available in the form requested. The available information is as follows:

Roads goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe: powered goods vehicles and trailers

	Thousand[1]
2001	2,398
2002	2,528
2003	2,593

[1] Number of one-way vehicle trips.

Source:
Roll-on Roll-off goods vehicle survey: DfT.

Rail Capacity (West Yorkshire)

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what plans he has to increase rail capacity *(a)* in West Yorkshire, *(b)* on the Wharfedale Line, *(c)* on the Harrogate Line and *(d)* on the Airedale Line; [160932]

(2) what representations he has received on increasing rail capacity in West Yorkshire; and if he will make a statement. [160933]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has published a Capacity Utilisation Policy and has also developed a new planning framework. A key aspect of this includes Regional Planning Assessments (RPA) which will form a basis for planning rail services over the medium to long term at a more detailed level. The SRA will produce the RPA for Yorkshire and Humberside in 2005, at which time specific capacity issues for the lines in question will be taken into account. I am not aware of any representations specifically on increasing rail capacity in West Yorkshire.

Road Safety

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many pedestrians were *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured in road traffic accidents in each year since 1997. [161553]

Mr. Jamieson: The following table shows, for Great Britain, how many pedestrians were *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured in road traffic accidents reported to the police, in each year from 1997 to 2002. This information has been published in "Road Casualties Great Britain 2002—Annual Report", a copy of which is in the Library.

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Killed	973	906	870	857	826	775
Injured	44,628	43,980	42,018	41,176	39,751	38,009
Total	45,601	44,886	42,888	42,033	40,577	38,784

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a copy of all assessments carried out by his Department of road accidents involving each car type. [161554]

Mr. Jamieson: The latest assessment of the risk of driver injury when different models of car are involved in an accident, was published in the Statistical Bulletin "Cars: Make and Model: The Risk of Driver Injury in Great Britain: 1996–2000", published on 15 May 2003. Copies have been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the *(a)* research projects and *(b)* campaign groups connected with road safety to which his Department gave money, listing the amounts given to each in 2003–04. [160994]

Mr. Jamieson: We provide financial assistance to organisations other than local authorities, who successfully bid under Challenge Fund arrangements, for grant towards the costs of initiatives which promote road safety. Details of the organisations assisted and the nature of their initiatives are provided in the table. We also commission research from a number of research organisations, universities and consultants. Details of the road safety research programme are available at: www.rmd.dft.gov.uk

Applicant	*Proposals*	*Grant (£)*
Ape Theatre Company	*Pills Thrills and automobiles*. The project is for funding of a drug/drive play aimed at 16 to 18-year-olds to reduce drug related accidents, through interaction and provocation of thought/consequences.	20,000.00
Brake	*Schools action packs*. The project is for the funding of Road Safety Week "action packs" for school teachers, nursery leaders and youth club leaders. Two action packs will be produced: one for teachers of nursery and primary age children (x10,000); the other for teachers of secondary school children (x3,000).	10,000
Brake	*Getting the road safety message across–a communications strategy for road safety professionals*. This project would provide a communications strategy for Road Safety Professionals and has the support of the Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association (LARSOA).	4,190.00
CAPT	*Child Safety Week* aims to raise awareness levels within local communities through those, at local level, best able to influence children and their parents/carers about avoiding accidents. The theme for Child Safety Week 2003 was "One moment can change everything". The message to participants was "Accidents happen in seconds but the effects can last a lifetime". Take action now for child safety. Road accidents, in particular pedestrian and cycling accidents, were one of the four accident topics highlighted.	10,000.00
Oxford Brookes University	*Pedestrian visibility: improving children's understanding and behaviour*. The project aims to develop a computer based tool to improve children's awareness of pedestrian visibility. This is a one off project which would take place at a purpose built Lifeskills centre in Bristol. A final report would be produced and the lessons learned will be incorporated into Lifeskills permanent training, which reaches 8,500 children per year (over 50 per cent. of year six children in Bristol and adjacent educational authorities).	10,000.00
RAC	*Grass Routes: investigating safer journeys*. The project aims to raise awareness of road safety and road hazards among one of the most at risk groups of road users, 11 to14-year-olds, by the production of a schools resource pack, which will be made available to all secondary schools in the UK. The pack will focus on safer journeys to school. The proposal would expand the project which took place last year (2002–03) and was a continuation of an earlier Grass Routes project which focused on the environmental impact of the school run.	18,447.63
RoSPA	*Child restraints video*. The purpose of the project is to produce a video and DVD of approximately 15 minutes duration to provide advice on choosing and using child car restraints and to give practical demonstrations of how to properly fit them. It will be designed to be used as a training aid by Road Safety Officers and health professionals, but also to be used by parents.	20,000.00
RoSPA	*Redevelopment of the ORSA website*. This project is to redevelop and manage (for the first year) the temporary website established by the Occupational Road Safety Alliance. The funding is to produce a professional and useful/useable resource for those involved in, or wanting information about, at-work road safety.	16,807.50
RoSPA	*Resource for parents (and other non-professional trainers) who supervise L drivers*. The purpose of this project is to produce advice for parents, including practical tips, on helping their children learn to drive.	12,007.00
RoSPA	*Presenting Road Safety: A guide for the media*. The purpose of this project is to revise and re-publish RoSPA's Guide for the media, "Presenting Road safety". Free copies of the Guide would be distributed to all Local Authorities, other road safety related organisations, the main media organisations and Regulatory bodies.	10,868.00
RoSPA	*Education resource for Key stage 1 children with English as second language*. This project would produce a spiral bound, stand up book for use with Key Stage 1 children whose first language is not English. The book would feature clear and simple road safety messages about crossing the road, cycling (away from traffic) and travelling in a car. It would also include an introduction to road signs within these topics. The messages to be in Bengali, Urdu and Punjabi, as they are the most common ethnic minority languages, as well as English.	19,835.00

Applicant	Proposals	Grant (£)
RoSPA	*Road safety resource file: Key stage 4 citizenship.* The purpose of this project is to produce a resource for use by teachers in schools to allow students to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding outlined in the Key stage 4 (KS4) Citizenship programme of study by using road safety issues. The resource will include facts and figures, details of the law and legislative instruments, newspaper articles and links to websites. There will be questions and discussion points, which will draw out key issues. In addition to a printed version, the resource will be produced in an electronic format suitable for downloading from the internet.	16,598.00
RoSPA	*Driving for work: safer journey planner.* This application is to fund the production and distribution of a leaflet Driving for Work: Safer Journey Planner" (a work-related version of the "Safer Journey Planner" which RoSPA produced in 2001). The target audience would be employers, managers and staff who drive (or ride) for work. The leaflet would set this issue in the context of the employer's (and individual driver's) duty to risk assess their work related road journeys.	7,712.00
RoSPSA	*Reprint of the Guidelines for the Management and Operation of Practical Child Cyclist Schemes.*	2,676.00
The Portman Group	*"I'll be Des" campaign packs.* The project will produce 1,000 "I'll be Des" campaign packs for Road Safety Officers.	10,318.00
University of Newcastle upon Tyne	*Kerbcraft road safety training video.* The proposed video complements the ongoing management and evaluation of the National Network of Child Pedestrian Training Schemes. The Department for Transport is currently funding100 road safety training schemes between 2002–2006. Each scheme is based around the "Kerbcraft" Model. The video will provide reference material for Kerbcraft co-ordinators, reinforcing the key objectives and methods for training each Kerbcraft skill at the roadside.	19,800.00
West Yorkshire Police Community Trust	*R.O.A.D.S. (Reduce our accidents decrease speed).* This project will fund 50 Young Citizen Panels to influence road users in West Yorkshire to decrease their speed. Each panel will identify a section of road where they consider that drivers speed is dangerous and invite their local Road Safety Officer and a police officer to assess the location. The panel will accompany the Police Officer when a driver is stopped to explain who they represent, why they are conducting the exercise and that they will be reporting on the project. Each driver will be given a copy of The Highway Code and appropriate literature. In January-April 2004 each panel will develop a further road safety project around child pedestrian safety.	7,000.00
	Successful projects	216,259.13

School Buses

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will carry out an assessment of the safety implications of allowing three children to travel on seats designed for two on school buses. [159860]

Mr. Jamieson: I have no plans to carry out an assessment of the safety implications of the three for two allowance as I have no evidence or data to support an argument that it represents a risk to child safety. Three for two is a concession, which local authorities may apply if they wish, and not a requirement.

I also refer my hon. Friend to my answer of 14 January 2004, *Official Report,* column 746W to my hon. Friend the Member for Monmouth (Mr. Edwards), concerning the carriage of children in buses and the three for two allowance.

Severn Bridge

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effect on economic activity of the Forest of Dean of the closures of the first Severn crossing bridge to vehicles in the past three months. [160781]

Mr. Jamieson: Closures of the first Severn crossing bridge during high winds are done to ensure the safety of the road user. No specific assessment has been made of the economic effect of closing the first Severn bridge. The second Severn crossing provides an alternative route and this reduces the impact on the local economy of any closures of the first bridge.

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether, when the Highways Agency makes the decision to close the first Severn crossing bridge, it differentiates between high-sided vehicles and saloon cars. [160782]

Mr. Jamieson: When the first Severn bridge is closed for reasons of safety, the Highways Agency makes no differentiation between high-sided vehicles and saloon cars. There is no infrastructure at present to filter vehicles. The agency has commissioned a report on the viability of 'filtering out' high-sided vehicles, using enforcement cameras in conjunction with traffic signing. This report is expected to be completed this spring.

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how the Highways Agency informs the public of the instances of closure of the first Severn crossing bridge; and if he will review the adequacy of this process. [160783]

Mr. Jamieson: The Highways Agency informs the public of bridge closures using advance traffic signing on the approaches to the M48 at Magor in the west and Almondsbury in the east. The agency's information line is also notified, together with other media sources. The effectiveness of this process is monitored regularly by the agency and other interested organisations.

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times, and for how long on each occasion, the first Severn crossing bridge has been closed to vehicles since the responsibility for doing so was transferred from the police to the Highways Agency. [160784]

Mr. Jamieson: There have been eight closures of the bridge due to high winds since the Highways Agency assumed responsibility from the police on 16 October 2003. Details are set out as follows.

Dates	*Times*
2–3 November 2003	05.10 (Sunday)–15.55 (Monday)
14–15 November 2003	11.15 (Friday)–02.30 (Saturday)
26 December 2003	16.20–21.00
8 January 2004	08.45–17.10
15–16 January 2004	18.40(Thursday)–10.00 (Friday)
31 January–1 February 2004	06.00 (Saturday)–02.00 (Sunday)
3 February 2004	09.55–19.40
7–8 February 2004	21.25 (Saturday)–07.00 (Sunday)

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria are used by the Highways Agency in determining when and for how long the first Severn crossing bridge should be closed to vehicles. [160785]

Mr. Jamieson: A protocol has been developed over several years to determine when and for how long the first Severn bridge should be closed to traffic. It is continually reviewed to explore ways of minimising the closures while ensuring the safety of road users.

The following criteria are currently applied:

Gust wind speed (knots)	*Threshold requirement (i.e. criteria set within the monitoring equipment)*	*Response (i.e. action to be taken)*
30	30 knots exceeded six times within any 10 minute period	All matrix signs to be set to indicate 40 mph
35	35 knots exceeded three times in any 10 minute period. Leeward lane identified by wind direction	Alternate matrix signs to be amended to indicate leeward lane closed in each direction
40	40 knots exceeded six times in any 10 minute period	Close crossing to all traffic
60	Any gust exceeds 60 knots	Close crossing to all traffic
70	Any gust exceeds 70 knots	Crossing not to be re-opened until confirmed by Severn River Crossings plc to ensure no damage sustained
Decreasing	No gust has exceeded 30 knots within 30 minute period	Seek authority to remove the imposed restrictions

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons responsibility for decisions on when to close the first Severn crossing bridge was transferred from the police to the Highways Agency. [160786]

Mr. Jamieson: The police were concerned that individual police officers were required to be accountable for making the decision to close the first Severn bridge. They were unwilling to continue to be the primary decision maker in the closure process. The agency has taken responsibility for this role and ownership of the operating protocol.

Speed Cameras

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is on the siting of *(a)* fixed and *(b)* mobile speed cameras; and if he will make a statement. [160651]

Mr. Jamieson: The "Handbook of rules and guidance for the operation of the national road safety camera programme for England and Wales" deals with the siting of fixed and mobile speed cameras in those areas participating in the safety camera cost recovery scheme. Copies were placed in the Libraries of the House on 5 December 2003. Guidance for those areas outside the scheme is contained in Circular Roads 1/92.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what revenues were raised from speed cameras in the Wycombe district council area in 2002–03. [160653]

Mr. Jamieson: Wycombe district council is part of the Thames Valley Safety Camera Partnership. Information on fine receipts for 2002–03 will be contained in the third year report of the safety camera programme, to be published shortly.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how revenues raised from speed cameras in Wycombe district council area are spent. [160654]

Mr. Jamieson: Wycombe district council is part of the Thames Valley Safety Camera Partnership. Receipts from fines are made available to the partnerships for the approved costs of purchasing and operating its cameras. Any additional fine receipts are passed to the Consolidated Fund.

Waterways Improvements

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many programmes have been undertaken to improve *(a)* harbours, *(b)* docks and *(c)* inland waterways since 1997. [160876]

Mr. Jamieson: This information is not available centrally. Harbour and navigation authorities are responsible for programmes of improvement in their areas and, although some harbour and dock projects require Government consent, there is no requirement for reporting of programmes.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Civil Society Organisations

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what funds were contributed

by his Department to UK-based civil society organisations in 2002, broken down by nation of the United Kingdom. [161403]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID support to Civil Society Organisations is predominantly targeted at UK organisations and with a UK wide base. We do not differentiate between the nations of the UK and do not collate figures on this basis.

Conferences

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many conferences were hosted by his Department *(a)* at home and *(b)* abroad, in the year to 29 February; and what the cost was of attending these conferences, broken down by (i) travel costs, (ii) food and drink costs, (iii) accommodation costs and (iv) miscellaneous costs. [161691]

Hilary Benn: This information is not held centrally and to collate it would incur disproportionate cost.

Departmental Communications

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many staff are employed in the Department to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158156]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Department for International Development employs the following numbers of staff in the communications field:

	Number
(a) Government Information and Communication Service	4
(b) Others	
(i) Press officers	6
(ii) Special advisers	2
(iii) Others	17

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the total expenditure on communications for the Department has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158192]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The total expenditure on communications for the Department for International Development in 2003–04 has been as follows:

	£
(a) Government Information and Communication Service staff	130,724
(b) Other staff	
(i) Press officers	270,504
(ii) Special advisers	132,184
(iii) Others	493,232

EU Development Finance

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the objectives were of the *(a)* environment and tropical forests and *(b)* training and public awareness projects financed by the General Commission Budget in 2002; what his Department's involvement in the projects was; what the outcome was; and what assessment he has made of their value for money. [160704]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The objectives of the Environment and tropical forests projects were to support the conservation and sustainable management of forests. DFID was consulted during the drafting of strategic guidelines and priorities for funding for the Environment and Forestry Budget Line. The Department also participated in committee meetings that reviewed proposals.

The training and public awareness projects aim to provide support for public awareness projects that increase European awareness of international development. There is an EC NGO co-financing management committee, which in 2002 consisted of delegates drawn from all 15 EU member states. The UK was represented on the committee by DFID staff.

There are a multitude of individual projects in both sectors, each with different objectives and outcomes and many of which run over the course of several years and therefore have not been completed yet. I refer the hon. Member to the information available in the "2003 Annual Report from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the EC Development Policy and the Implementation of External Assistance 2002" and the European Commission's website http://europa.eu.int for further details.

When considering Commission funding proposals, the Department took a wide range of factors into consideration, including likely cost-effectiveness and value for money. Any concerns about value for money were raised with the Commission. Many of the projects approved in 2002 are in the early stages of implementation. An assessment of the value for money will only be possible once the projects have been completed. The EC, through its results-orientated management system and strengthened evaluation systems, is best placed to carry out such an assessment.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the value for money provided by EU Official Development Assistance on *(a)* production sectors, *(b)* social infrastructure and services, *(c)* economic infrastructure and services and *(d)* multisector/cross-cutting projects in 2002 that was financed by the General Commission Budget and the European Development Fund; and on what criteria his assessment is based. [160709]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: There are a multitude of individual projects in the areas cited by the hon. Member, each with different objectives and outcomes and many of which run over the course of several years and therefore have not been completed yet. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the information available in the "2003 Annual Report from the European Commission

to the Council and the European Parliament on the EC Development Policy and the Implementation of External Assistance 2002" and the European Commission's website http://europa.eu.int for further details.

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Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's involvement was in the *(a)* humanitarian aid, *(b)* food aid and *(c)* pre-accession, Malta, Cyprus, Turkey projects financed under the General Commission Budget in 2002; and what the outcome was in each case. [160710]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID was consulted during the drafting of strategic guidelines and priorities for funding in all three areas. The UK also participated in committee meetings that reviewed specific proposals. For example, DFID was represented at the Humanitarian Aid Committee which met monthly in 2002 to consider European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO)'s draft funding decisions. Relevant DFID staff were consulted about individual proposals. Member states agreed ECHO'S overall 2002 strategy in late 2001.

There are a multitude of individual projects in the areas cited by the hon. Member, each with different objectives and outcomes and many of which run over the course of several years and therefore have not been completed yet. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the information available in the "2003 Annual Report from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the EC Development Policy and the Implementation of External Assistance 2002" and the European Commission's website http:// europa.eu.int for further details.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the objectives were of the *(a)* Latin America, *(b)* Asia and *(c)* pre-accession PHARE projects financed under the General Commission Budget in 2002; what his Department's involvement in each project was; what the outcome was; and what assessment he has made of value for money in each case. [160711]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The overall objective of the many individual projects financed in Latin America and Asia is to promote human development. The objective of the PHARE programme is to help candidate countries' preparations to accede to the European Union. This consists of technical assistance with the implementation of the aquis communautaire, and the building of institutional capacity.

DFID was consulted during the drafting of strategic guidelines and priorities for funding in all three areas. DFID and/or other Government Departments also participated in committee meetings that reviewed specific proposals.

There are a multitude of individual projects in Asia, Latin America and the PHARE countries, each with different objectives and outcomes and many of which run over the course of several years and therefore have not been completed yet. I refer the hon. Member to the information available in the "2003 Annual Report from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the EC Development Policy and the Implementation of External Assistance 2002" and the European Commission's website http:// europa.eu.int for further details.

When considering Commission funding proposals, the Department took a wide range of factors into consideration, including likely cost-effectiveness and value for money. Any concerns about value for money were raised with the Commission. Many of the projects approved in 2002 are in the early stages of implementation. An assessment of the value for money will only be possible once the projects have been completed. The EC, through its results-orientated management system and strengthened evaluation systems, is best placed to carry out such an assessment.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the objectives were of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development *(a)* near and Middle East, *(b)* Mediterranean and *(c)* South Africa projects financed under the General Commission Budget in 2002; what his Department's involvement in each project was; what the outcome was; and what assessment he has made of value for money in each case. [160712]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) was established to foster the transition towards open market-oriented economies, and to promote private and entrepreneurial initiative, in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. EBRD does not cover any of the regions identified in the hon. Gentleman's question.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the objectives were of the *(a)* Western Balkans, *(b)* NIS and Mongolia/ CEECS and *(c)* NIS and Mongolia/TACIS projects financed under the General Commission Budget in 2002; what his Department's involvement in them was; what the outcome was; and what assessment he has made of their value for money. [160713]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The objective of the Commission's programme of assistance to the Western Balkans (the CARDS programme) is to support the Stabilisation and Association Process in the region through reconstruction, work on democracy, human rights and the rule of law, economic and social development and promoting closer relations between recipient countries and between those countries and the EU. The objectives of the TACIS programme are to

promote the transition to a market economy and to reinforce democracy and the rule of law in the CIS countries.

Representatives of DFID sit on the Management Committees that oversee the Commission's implementation of these programmes. In addition proposals for spending in Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania and FYROM are approved by the Governing Board of the European Agency for Reconstruction, on which DFID is also represented.

In both CARDS and TACIS, programmes funded under the 2002 Budget will typically last for at least three years. There are a multitude of individual projects in the areas cited by the hon. Member, each with different objectives and outcomes. I refer the hon. Member to the information available in the "2003 Annual Report from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the EC Development Policy and the Implementation of External Assistance 2002" and the European Commission's website http://europa.eu.int for further details.

When considering Commission funding proposals, DFID took a wide range of factors into consideration, including likely cost-effectiveness and value for money. Any concerns about value for money were raised with the Commission. Many of the projects approved in 2002 are in the early stages of implementation. An assessment of the value for money will only be possible once the projects have been completed. The EC, through its results-orientated management system and strengthened evaluation systems, is best placed to carry out such an assessment.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the outcome was of the *(a)* anti-personnel mines and *(b)* pre-accession ISPA projects financed from the General Commission Budget in 2002; and what his Department's involvement in each project was. [160714]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID was represented at the working groups that considered the projects presented by the European Commission to member states. There are a multitude of individual projects in the areas cited by the hon. Member each with different objectives and outcomes and many of which run over the course of several years and therefore have not been completed yet. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the information available in the "2003 Annual Report from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the EC Development Policy and the Implementation of External Assistance 2002" and the European Commission's website http://europa.eu.int for further details.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the objectives were of the *(a)* co-ordination and evaluation, *(b)* social infrastructure and services and *(c)* global health fund projects financed under the General Commission Budget in 2002; what his Department's involvement in the projects was; what the outcome was; and what assessment he has made of their value for money. [160715]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The overall objective of the co-ordination and evaluation projects is to improve the long-term effectiveness of EC aid. Projects under the social infrastructure and services focus on reducing drug abuse. Global Health Fund projects support the Global Health Fund's aim to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

When considering Commission funding proposals, DFID took a wide range of factors into consideration, including likely cost-effectiveness and value for money. Any concerns about value for money were raised with the Commission. Many of the projects approved in 2002 are in the early stages of implementation. An assessment of the value for money will only be possible once the projects have been completed. The EC, through its results-orientated management system and strengthened evaluation systems, is best placed to carry out such an assessment.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development in respect of which projects financed under the General Commission Budget co-financing of non-governmental organisations took place in 2002. [160716]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: A multitude of individual projects under the co-financing of non-governmental organisations budget line were implemented in 2002. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the information available in the "2003 Annual Report from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the EC Development Policy and the Implementation of External Assistance 2002" and the European Commission's website http://europa.eu.int for further details.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the value for money provided by EU Official Development Assistance on *(a)* Action Relating to Debt and *(b)* Commodity Aid and the General Programme in 2002 financed by the General Commission Budget and the European Development Fund; and on what criteria his assessment is based. [160719]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: When considering Commission funding proposals, DFID took a wide range of factors into consideration, including likely cost-effectiveness and value for money. Any concerns about value for money were raised with the Commission. Many of the projects approved in 2002 are in the early stages of implementation. An assessment of the value for money will only be possible once the projects have been completed. The EC, through its results-orientated management system and strengthened evaluation systems, is best placed to carry out such an assessment.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the value for money provided by EU Official Development Assistance devoted to emergency and distress relief in 2002; and on what criteria his assessment is based. [160720]

Hilary Benn: When considering Commission funding proposals, DFID took a wide range of factors into consideration, including likely cost-effectiveness and value for money. Any concerns about value for money were raised with the Commission. Many of the projects approved in 2002 have only recently been completed.

The EC's results-orientated management system and strengthened evaluation systems will enable it to assess their value for money in due course.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the objectives were of the pre-accession SAPARD project financed under the General Commission budget in 2002 and referred to as Item B7–01 in the financial tables on page 257 of the Annual Report 2003 from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the EC Development Policy and the implementation of external assistance in 2002; what his Department's involvement in the project was; what the outcome was; and what assessment he has made of its value for money. [161487]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Special Accession Programme for Agricultural and Rural Development (SAPARD) aims to help candidate countries deal with the problems of the structural adjustment in their agricultural sectors and rural areas, as well as in the implementation of the acquis communautaire concerning the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and related legislation. DFID was consulted during the drafting of strategic guidelines and priorities for funding. DFID was also represented at committee meetings that reviewed proposals.

When considering Commission funding proposals, the Department took a wide range of factors into consideration, including likely cost-effectiveness and value for money. Any concerns about value for money were raised with the Commission. Many of the projects approved in 2002 are in the early stages of implementation. An assessment of the value for money will only be possible once the projects have been completed. The European Commission (EC), through its results-orientated management system and strengthened evaluation systems, is best placed to carry out such an assessment.

Haiti

Mr. Roy: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid the Government plans to send to Haiti. [160255]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has sent a two-person team to Haiti to assess the humanitarian situation and discuss needs with humanitarian agencies, including the United Nations agencies that will shortly be launching a consolidated Flash Appeal. Decisions on what humanitarian assistance the UK will give to Haiti will be made after this mission and appeal.

The European Communities Humanitarian Office (ECHO) is providing Euros 1.8 million for emergency health care. The UK share (19 per cent.) of this EC assistance is approximately £240,000. Following the UN Appeal, ECHO are considering further support.

DFID will continue to fund Non-Governmental Organisations and Civil Society Groups through the Small Grants Scheme and the Civil Society Challenge Fund. DFID will also continue to provide funds through international agencies which work in Haiti, including the European Union (DFID provides approximately 13 per cent. of the European Development Fund budget).

Iraq

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what programmes his Department has introduced to involve Iraqi women in *(a)* government and *(b)* other areas of public life in Iraq; and if he will list the (i) personnel and (ii) funding that have been committed. [161475]

Hilary Benn: Gender equality is an integral part of DFID's work in Iraq. We are working specifically to support Iraqi women in their involvement in political processes and reconstruction. A £500,000 grant to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) strategy for empowering women in Iraq is strengthening women's groups at a governorate level and encouraging government to take proper account of the needs of women. Two DFID-funded advisers provide support and expertise to the Iraqi Governing Council, the Coalition Provisional Authority and to the newly forming women's groups. We have also recently established a £5 million fund to promote political representation and participation by all Iraqi people, which will include support to achieving the goal of 25 per cent. women's representation in the National Assembly.

Middle East

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has for the provision of technical assistance to the Palestinian civil police in the West Bank and Gaza. [160145]

Hilary Benn: DFID is considering a programme of assistance to the Palestinian Ministry of Interior to help establish a more legitimate, effective and accountable civil and public order police force. We plan to second a police adviser for a period of six months. He will provide short-term technical support, and make an assessment of how best a longer-term programme could be delivered in co-ordination with other donor partners and other security sector reform activities.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he has taken to ensure complete transparency in the use by the Palestinian Authority of development aid provided by his Department. [160146]

Hilary Benn: The vast majority of DFID's assistance to Palestinians has not been provided directly to the Palestinian Authority, but goes through UN agencies, NGOs, and consultancy contracts, all of which have a high degree of transparency; but greater transparency in the PA's use of its resources is a priority for all donors.

Substantial progress has been made since 2002 in improving the Palestinian Authority's financial management, the oversight of public spending and accountability. This has largely been the result of efforts by the Palestinian Finance Minister. We have helped the World Bank carry out a thorough Country Financial Accountability Assessment, which has set out an agenda for further improvements in these areas. The continuing need for donors to support the PA budget directly will ensure that these areas remain under close scrutiny. We are ready to provide further support if needed.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will visit the West Bank and Gaza to assess the requirements for *(a)* humanitarian and *(b)* development assistance. [160148]

Hilary Benn: I visited the West Bank and Gaza Strip in July 2003 to see at first hand the conditions on the ground, and hold discussions with a wide range of partners including Government, civil society, and other donors, about humanitarian and development needs. We plan to publish a Country Assistance Plan for Palestinians in April, which sets out DFID's strategy for the next two years. I have no immediate plans to visit again, but will consider a further visit depending on progress with the Middle East Peace Process.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many people in the West Bank and Gaza are dependent upon non-governmental organisations or international relief organisations for employment. [160149]

Hilary Benn: These data are not readily available. Job creation programmes, established by both Government and NGOs, have played an important role in helping sustain the livelihoods of thousands of families during the last three years. As part of its emergency relief activities, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) provide temporary jobs for unemployed refugees. In 2004 it plans to provide over two million workdays of employment.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effect of development assistance provided by his Department on levels of poverty in the West Bank and Gaza. [160151]

Hilary Benn: DFID regularly monitors the impact of its projects against their objectives. Some have a specific poverty alleviation focus; others support longer-term Palestinian institutional development needs where the impact on poverty is less direct, and is more difficult to measure. But without peace the prospects for economic growth and poverty reduction are not sustainable. Only a political solution will solve these problems.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effect of *(a)* movement restrictions and *(b)* land confiscation on agriculture in the West Bank and Gaza. [160152]

Hilary Benn: Movement restriction and land confiscation have led to a severe decline in agricultural production in the West Bank and Gaza, and an increased and unsustainable dependence on food aid. Palestinians, supported by donors, continue to seek innovative ways to maintain agricultural production.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the *(a)* level of food aid provided by his Department for residents of the West Bank and Gaza and *(b)* the effectiveness of its distribution. [160153]

Hilary Benn: DFID have provided a £500,000 contribution to the World Food Programme food aid appeal in 2002, and have contributed over £25 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's Emergency Appeals since the start of the Intifada in 2000.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)'s Emergency Appeals support job creation programmes, health, education, and shelter programmes as well as food aid. Our support is not earmarked for food aid alone. Effective targeting and distribution have improved with better co-ordination between the main food providers.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will assess the effectiveness of the work of his Department in enhancing Palestinian access to water in the West Bank and Gaza. [160154]

Hilary Benn: DFID has worked with the Palestinian Water Authority and NGOs for several years supporting the effective delivery of water services in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Four projects that have improved access to potable water, sanitation and environmental health in some of the poorest communities have recently been brought to a successful conclusion. We currently fund two projects.

Support for the Sustainable Management of the West Bank and Gaza Strip Aquifers project is enhancing the Palestinian Water Authority's understanding of the western aquifer, which is an essential source of water in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. We also support a Water Access and Storage project to enable villages in the south Hebron district of the West Bank that do not have access to the networked water supply to obtain more secure access to drinking water and sustainable improved sanitation. Both projects are making good progress.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the need for a revision of water access arrangements in the West Bank and Gaza. [160155]

Hilary Benn: Early progress on securing Palestinian water rights would benefit the Palestinian people. DFID has supported the Palestinian Negotiations Affairs Department to research their position in preparation for negotiations on water access. While it would be possible to advance discussions immediately, the link between water rights and other issues such as borders and the separation barrier has so far led to a reluctance on both sides to engage on the issue outside the framework of overall final status negotiations.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what information he has of rates of malnutrition in *(a)* the West Bank and *(b)* Gaza in (i) 2000, (ii) 2001, (iii) 2002 and (iv) 2003. [160157]

Hilary Benn: Information about nutritional status in the West Bank and Gaza is uncertain, and no systematic monitoring has taken place. Various organisations have carried out surveys using different methodologies. There are no readily available data to compare the incidence of malnutrition across years.

One of the most authoritative recent studies is the Nutritional Assessment and Sentinel Surveillance System, done in 2002 by Johns Hopkins and Al-Quds

Universities. Looking at children 6–59 months, they found in the West Bank, 4.3 per cent. with acute malnutrition (wasting), and 7.9 per cent. with chronic malnutrition (stunting). In the Gaza strip these figures were 13.3 per cent. and 17.5 per cent. respectively. They found that 7.8 per cent. of children aged 6–59 months in the Palestinian Territory suffer from acute malnutrition, and 11.7 per cent. from chronic malnutrition. A normally nourished reference population would have 2.28 per cent. of population with global malnutrition, and 0.13 per cent. with severe malnutrition.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department is providing to the Palestinian Authority in developing poverty alleviation policies. [160159]

Hilary Benn: DFID supported the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to carry out a national Participatory Poverty Assessment for the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 2002. We are now exploring with the PA, the World Bank and other donors the potential for a medium-term, comprehensive poverty reduction strategy for the Palestinian Territory. Continued DFID and other donor support to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and a proposed new Pro-poor Participatory Planning programme, will help develop the PA's ability to monitor and assess poverty both quantitatively and qualitatively, and respond appropriately. Fiscal crisis is the major constraint on the PA's ability to alleviate poverty.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the results achieved by the Task Force on Project Implementation in the West Bank and Gaza. [160160]

Hilary Benn: The Task Force on Project Implementation (TFPI) was established as a representative mechanism of the international community for ensuring effective implementation of donor-funded projects in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. DFID believe that lobbying Israel on humanitarian access is most effectively handled through such co-ordinated donor mechanisms. The TFPI has had some success, but not all agreements reached have been implemented in practice.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to achieve donor harmonisation in the West Bank and Gaza. [160161]

Hilary Benn: DFID works increasingly with other donors to help mobilise resources in support of agreed Palestinian Authority priorities. We have contributed to a number of multi-donor World Bank led initiatives, and have formed alliances with other bilateral donors and Palestinian partners to ensure that funding is better harmonised. More effective delivery of humanitarian and development assistance is one of three objectives in our draft Country Assistance Plan for Palestinians.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to encourage a process of development planning in the West Bank and Gaza led by the Palestinian Authority. [160162]

Hilary Benn: The Palestinian Authority's capacity to lead on strategic planning and donor co-ordination has been constrained during the "intifada". With support from international partners it is now starting to play a more proactive role. DFID's proposed support to the Participatory Poverty Planning initiative would focus on the Ministry of Planning and could advance this process. When the time is right, we plan to support the Palestinian Authority in its desire to develop a priority-based, transparent national development framework which sets out the Authority's priorities.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the Israeli Government about freedom of movement for humanitarian goods and personnel in the West Bank and Gaza. [160163]

Hilary Benn: The Government frequently makes representations to the Israeli government about these issues, both bilaterally and with international partners.

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what provisions have been made for aid to the Palestinian territories. [159810]

Hilary Benn: At the start of the current financial year our agreed budget for support to Palestinians was £24.5 million. This includes funding for both the Palestinian territory and for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), which provides services to Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria as well as the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Planned allocations for 2004–05 and 2005–06 are £26.5 million, an increase of £2 million over the budgeted figures for the current year. In 2003–04 and previous years since the intifada started in 2000, spending plans for the Palestinian territory and UNRWA have been supplemented by additional resources made available in-year in response to unpredictable events.

We have increased our expenditure in 2003–04 to £40.2 million in response to emergency needs and Middle East peace process opportunities. The 2003–04 figure also includes £0.7 million allocated to DFID from the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP), which is managed by the FCO on behalf of FCO, MOD and DFID. Figures for future years make no assumptions about additional resources from within DFID or the GCPP.

Mr. Blunt: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* UK and *(b)* EU development assistance was given to (i) the Palestinian National Authority and (ii) other institutions or organisations representing Palestinian civil society in each year from 2000–01 to 2002–03. [160242]

Hilary Benn: The UK figures are in the following table. The European Commission does not record detailed programme expenditure in the format requested. Information on the Commission's programme of support to Palestinians is on the website www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations

£ million

	UK bilateral programme	
	Support through PA institutions	Support through civil society organisations
2000–01	2	6.3
2001–02	2.4	11.6
2002–03	6.7	7.5

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much financial support the UK has given to the Palestine Liberation Organisation negotiation support unit since 1998; what conditions were attached to such funding; what arrangements have been put in place to monitor such funding; whether the results of such monitoring have been published; and whether any of the funding has been used for the presentation of the Palestinian case relating to Israel's Security Force at the International Court of Justice at the Hague. [159670]

Hilary Benn: The UK has committed £9.2 million for support to the Palestinian Negotiations Support Unit (NSU). This covers funding from 1998 until 2006. £5.6 million has been disbursed to date. Our support is delivered through a contract with ASI Ltd, who are accountable to us for the use of our funding. There are no specific conditions attached to the funding. We monitor the assistance NSU provides against an agreed budget and objectives. The governments of Norway, Sweden, Netherlands and Denmark provide complementary funding, and we are integrating our monitoring with theirs. Project monitoring reports are not normally published unless there is a reason to do so. UK funds have supported the NSU's advice to the Palestinian Authority in presenting their case on the Israeli separation barrier at the International Court of Justice. It is not unusual for the UK to give funding to developing countries to help them negotiate more effectively in international fora, for example the WTO, where they make take positions that run counter to those of the EU and individual member states.

Nile Conference

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the recent conference on the future of the Nile; and what bilateral discussions he has had with each of the participating countries involved in the conference. [160942]

Hilary Benn: Officials and Ministers from the Nile Basin countries meet frequently within the framework of the Nile Basin Initiative to discuss co-operation on the complex issues relating to the Nile.

The annual Nile Council of Ministers meeting begins on 18 March 2004 in Nairobi, and will continue previous discussions on how best to use the Nile basin for poverty alleviation, resource protection, and mutually beneficial gains including promoting regional integration and reducing potential conflict.

The UK has taken part in technical and political discussions in the region and will be participating in the Nile Basin Trust Fund committee meeting in Nairobi from 16–18 March, which precedes the Council of Ministers meeting, and includes a session with them on the final day of the conference.

The UK is providing some financial support to the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office in Addis Ababa for capacity building, and will be providing additional funding through the Nile Basin Trust Fund, to assist with water resources management and socio-economic development across the basin.

Procurement Policy

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development in what ways environmentally sustainable procurement strategies within the Department have driven innovation in the design and supply of products. [159151]

Hilary Benn: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment on 10 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1543W.

Rwanda

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the November 2003 agreement between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo to repatriate Rwandan Hutus from the east of Congo. [159842]

Hilary Benn: The agreement in November 2003 between Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was part of a follow-up process to the Pretoria Agreement signed between the two countries on 30 July 2002. That agreement provided for the Government of Rwanda to withdraw all its forces from the DRC. It did this by October 2002 and the withdrawal was verified by MONUC (the UN Mission to the DRC). It also provided for the Government of DRC to cease all support for ex-FAR/Interhamwe and to encourage the voluntary repatriation of Rwandans from DRC, particularly combatants. The Government of DRC issued a declaration stating that the FDLR (Forces Democratiques de Liberation du Rwanda) were unwelcome in its territory and arrested two senior genocidaires in 2002. The UK Government fully supports this process as an important means of ending conflict in the region and achieving greater stability.

The UN Security Council has tasked MONUC with the voluntary repatriation of non-Congolese combatants. It has established bases in eastern DRC to effect this. MONUC estimates that, so far, 6,600 Rwandans ex-combatants and their dependants have been repatriated (not all these repatriations have been facilitated directly by MONUC).

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's position is on the Rwandan Government's use of retraining camps known as solidarity camps for former members of the Forces Armées Rwandaises ahead of their reintegration into Rwandan society. [159848]

Hilary Benn: Since 2002, DFID has supported the Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (RDRP) with a grant of £5.5 million. The RDRP's mission statement is

"to support successful social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants in their respective communities so as to realize national security, reconciliation, and development. This will be achieved through demobilizing ex-combatants and supporting their social and economic reintegration into communities of their own choice for a fresh start, thereby saving economic resources for investment in social and economic development."

DFID judge that the RDRP has been well managed by the Government of Rwanda's Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (RDRC).

The DFID office in Rwanda has been engaged in working with the RDRC to ensure successful reintegration of ex-combatants. DFID has been particularly active in working to ensure that the RDRP addresses practical social and economic issues; including the perception and acceptance by communities of ex-combatants, the opportunities for skills training and employment of ex-combatants, access to counselling and medical services, and the particular needs of female and child ex-combatants in the reintegration process.

The re-integration sessions that ex-Force Armées Rwandaise (ex-FAR) attend last up to two weeks. These sessions are voluntary and are the same as those attended by those demobilised from the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF). The sessions are focused on explaining the benefits available to the ex-FAR and ex-RDF under the RDRP, such as the recognition of service allowance, available medical services and counselling as well as whether they are eligible for extra funds if they are assessed as being particularly vulnerable. They are also given advice on how they can best utilise the allowances they receive, for example in how to establish income generating co-operatives and how to prepare project proposals to access loans and grants.

It should be noted that the majority of ex-FAR soldiers have already settled in communities before they attend the RDRP sessions, sometimes for a number of years. Accordingly, their reintegration needs are often not as acute as other ex-combatants and the two week sessions are felt to be sufficient to help them access and utilise their benefits. When back in their communities, ex-FAR, like other demobilised ex-combatants, are able to use the services of the RDRP's Provincial Programme Officers to follow-up on advice and information on the benefits and services available under the RDRP and through other community-wide programmes of support.

Uganda

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's policy is on helping Ugandan crop growers share the benefits of that country's economic growth. [159843]

Hilary Benn: In rural Uganda the main constraint on the farming community's ability to share the benefits of economic growth is the failure of markets to provide good information, farm inputs, and outlets for increased farm production. DFID's policy is to address this market failure by supporting public investment in the provision of the goods and services that underpin agricultural development.

The UK supports the Uganda Government's Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA). The PMA is a framework for Government action in support of smallholder farming households. It directs public resources to ensure that markets operate effectively and provides farmers with access to both agricultural inputs and markets for agricultural produce. Government institutions charged with agricultural service provision have been restructured to ensure they respond effectively to the demands of farmers. PMA priorities include the provision of better information through agricultural research and advice from Government extension workers; the provision of financial services; and physical investment, for example on rural feeder roads, to improve access to markets. Smallholders are supported in accessing regional and international markets. DFID has been closely involved in the design and implementation of the PMA.

Improved export opportunities will be particularly important in the development of Uganda's agricultural sector. We have funded a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening Uganda's trade policy and access to wider international markets.

Westminster Hall

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make it his policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159610]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member for Castle Point to the answer given by the Leader of the House on 8 March 2004, *Official Report,* column 1234W.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the level of assistance provided by the World Food Programme to urban areas of Zimbabwe in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004. [160722]

Hilary Benn: The humanitarian and economic situation in Zimbabwe continues to deteriorate, fuelled by the Government of Zimbabwe's poorly implemented fast track land programme and economic policies, as well as the effects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and erratic rainfall.

World Food Programme (WFP) emergency operations in Zimbabwe since 2002 have focused principally on rural areas, where food security is most closely related to agricultural production. General food distribution is rarely the most appropriate intervention in urban environments, where commercial availability and affordability are the principal factors affecting access to food. However, DFID are working with WFP in Bulawayo and Harare to provide targeted feeding to growth-faltering children under five. Recent vulnerability assessments indicate a sharp rise in urban vulnerability levels. The humanitarian community are

currently discussing the most appropriate interventions. WFP are extending their school feeding programme in urban areas.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will provide *(a)* chemicals and *(b)* personnel to the local authority in Harare to improve its water treatment capacity. [160723]

Hilary Benn: DFID recently committed £200,000 to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the procurement of water purification chemicals for use by the Harare and Bulawayo city councils. This emergency intervention responds to the lack of foreign currency available to the local authorities in the current economic crisis, preventing them from procuring the necessary chemicals and resulting in the high risk of water-borne disease outbreaks, particularly in the overcrowded suburbs and public institutions, such as hospitals and schools. Technical assistance is being provided by other agencies, notably UNICEF.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the effect on the value of the EU humanitarian aid to Zimbabwe of the method of its conversion into local currency. [160724]

Hilary Benn: Concerns about the exchange rate used by the European Commission were raised in a report of the European Court of Auditors. Our understanding is that those concerns were limited to part of the spending of the European Development Fund (EDF) that was converted into Zimbabwe dollars during 2002. Humanitarian aid, which is largely funded from the EU budget rather than the EDF, was therefore not affected. Humanitarian aid is in any case very largely used to procure food and other goods outside Zimbabwe and would not be converted into Zimbabwe dollars.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has received on the need for pharmaceutical supplies in hospitals in Zimbabwe. [160725]

Hilary Benn: Along with the humanitarian programme, Health and HIV/AIDS is a priority for DFID support in Zimbabwe. DFID recently provided £1.8 million for UNICEF to procure vaccines and other essential immunisation programme commodities for use in routine childhood immunisation. DFID has just granted £590,000 to the National Blood Transfusion Services (NBTS) in Zimbabwe for import of test kits and reagents to allow continued provision of safe blood in hospitals, with particular reference to specialised testing for HIV and hepatitis. The European Commission is also providing essential drugs to the health sector. DFID is funding very substantial HIV/AIDS prevention programmes that include provision of hormonal contraceptives in addition to condoms.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if his Department will provide financial assistance to the George VI School and Rehabilitation Centre in Bulawayo to assist its work with disabled and orphaned children. [160727]

Hilary Benn: The George VI School and Rehabilitation Centre can apply for a grant through the UK Government's Small Grant Scheme, administered by the British embassy in Harare. Information on the scheme is available on the internet http://www.britainzw.org or from the British embassy at 8th Floor, Corner House, Samora Machel Avenue/Leopold Takawira Street, PO Box 1030, Harare.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the work of the Legal Resources Foundation in Zimbabwe; and if his Department will contribute funds to it. [160731]

Hilary Benn: Our assessment is that the work of the Legal Resources Foundation is excellent and makes an important contribution to civil society in Zimbabwe. At present, DFID's programme in Zimbabwe is focused on humanitarian relief and support to tackling HIV/AIDS, and we therefore do not support the Legal Resources Foundation. Should this change we would be happy to consider providing funding.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to ensure that credit is not claimed by the Zimbabwean Government for aid provided to Zimbabwe by his Department. [160732]

Hilary Benn: British aid to Zimbabwe is channelled through UN agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable sections of society. In collaboration with our development partners, we operate a policy of zero tolerance towards political interference—including claiming credit for donor food distribution—in humanitarian operations. Procedures in place to reduce the risk of political interference have proved generally effective to date. Any such incidents are quickly identified, reported and followed up, including suspending food distribution where appropriate. We and other donors and agencies also use the media when appropriate to publicise our activities and to explain the extent of donor support to Zimbabwe during the present crisis. Looking ahead to the parliamentary elections anticipated early next year, monitoring of any political interference will be given even higher attention in coming months.

NORTHERN IRELAND

School Meals

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps he has taken to promote healthy eating in schools in Northern Ireland. [148764]

Jane Kennedy: When providing school meals, school authorities are currently required to comply with the nutritional standards produced by the Caroline Walker Trust. These aim to contribute to a better-balanced diet which contains more bread, cereals, other starchy foods, fruit and vegetables and which is rich in minerals and vitamins, and which has less fat, sugar and salty foods. Also, the Department of Education is about to initiate a pilot study for one calendar year from next March to determine how best to introduce new compulsory nutritional standards for school meals and ensure the best chance of success.

Health education is a compulsory element of the curriculum for all pupils. They are taught to make responsible decisions about their diet, and to know and understand the contribution of food to growth, energy and health.

Funding has also been obtained to develop Health Promoting Schools Schemes with particular attention to schools in areas of social need.

PRIME MINISTER

Law Officers' Advice Advice

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* hon. Members other than Ministers and *(c)* other authorised persons who were provided with a full version of the Attorney-General's advice to Government on the legality of the military action against Iraq in March 2003. [161190]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1431W.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Prime Minister what the *(a)* job titles and *(b)* salaries are of (i) Mr. Geoff Mulgan and (ii) Mr. Matthew Taylor; and whether they attended the launch of the book Growth Fetish by Mr. Clive Hamilton in an official capacity. [161236]

The Prime Minister: Geoff Mulgan is the Head of Policy at No. 10. Matthew Taylor is a senior special adviser.

In accordance with exemption 12 of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, details of individual salaries are not disclosed in order to protect the privacy of the individuals concerned.

Geoff Mulgan attended the book launch in a personal capacity. Matthew Taylor did not attend the event.

Agricultural Subsidies

Bob Spink: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make it his policy during the United Kingdom's presidency of the EU, to remove agricultural protectionism from Europe as a means of promoting international development; and if he will make a statement. [161942]

The Prime Minister: The Government fully supports the aims of the World Trade Organisation's Doha Declaration aimed at substantial reductions in trade distorting agricultural subsidies and protection, and placing particular emphasis on the need to help developing countries.

Last June the EU agreed a major reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. One of the key aims of our Presidency will be to work towards agreement in the WTO which would significantly reduce barriers to agricultural trade and bring economic benefits to developing and developed countries alike.

Global Security

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister when he was first informed of the covert nuclear proliferation activities of Abdul Qadir Khan, to which he made reference in his speech on global security issues on 5 March. [161753]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), on 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 757W.

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister whether he has discussed with the other four permanent members of the United Nations Security Council the proposals for reform of the role of the United Nations set out in his speech on global security threats in Sedgefield on 5 March. [161754]

The Prime Minister: My discussions with the leaders of other permanent Members of the Security Council regularly deal with the need for effective collective action to address all threats to international peace and security. The Government are a long-standing supporter of reform in this area, for example through the principles I set out in 1999 to clarify the circumstances in which the international community can intervene to avert an overwhelming humanitarian catastrophe. I welcome the UN Secretary-General's decision to set up a High Level Panel to review how the UN can respond more effectively to threats to international peace and security. We will continue to promote this debate in discussions with our partners within and outside the Security Council.

Middle East

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister what matters in respect of *(a)* Israel's weapons of mass destruction and *(b)* the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East were discussed with the Palestinian Prime Minister on 8 March. [161179]

The Prime Minister: None. The priority of the meeting was to discuss with the Palestinian Prime Minister the Middle East Peace Process and efforts to move it forward.

Welsh Assembly

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Prime Minister what recent assessment he has made of the implications of giving additional powers to the Welsh Assembly. [161194]

The Prime Minister: Since devolution on 1 July 1999, the Government have agreed to transfer additional functions to the National Assembly for Wales, including this past year responsibility for the fire service, student support and the Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS). They are also considering a request from the Assembly Government for the transfer of responsibility for Animal Health.

The Richard Commission established by the National Assembly for Wales to consider its powers and electoral arrangements is due to report to the Welsh Assembly Government soon. The Government will consider any representations which the Assembly Government may make in response to the Richard Commission's report.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Conferences

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many conferences were hosted by the Department in the UK and abroad in the year to 29 February; and what the cost was of these conferences, broken down by *(a)* travel costs, *(b)* food and drink, *(c)* accommodation and *(d)* miscellaneous costs. [160796]

Mr. Straw: Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Services (Conferences and Events) has organised 14 conferences for the FCO in the period in question, one of which was held overseas. Total costs were: travel: £126,981.94; catering: £71,818.69; accommodation: £207,442.46; miscellaneous: £320,742.21.

The FCO's Executive Agency, Wilton Park, held 43 conferences in the UK on a wide range of international themes from March 2003 to February 2004. Costs are offset by conference sponsorship, both from FCO departments and from outside organisations. Total costs were: travel for speakers and participants £324,112; catering £125,000; accommodation £265,000; miscellaneous (running costs of staff and premises) £2,238,000.

Additionally, five Wilton Park conferences were held abroad in that period. Local conference partners meet the in-country costs for food, accommodation and miscellaneous costs.

FCO Directorates may opt to manage events from their own resources rather than ask FCO Services (Conferences and Events) to do so, but details of these events are not held centrally and can be collated only at disproportionate cost.

Israel

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the scale of the benefits to Israel of its preferential terms of trade with the European Union. [160164]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I have been asked to reply.

None.

Under the terms of the EU-Israel Association Agreement, goods originating in the State of Israel may be imported into the European Union at preferential rates of duty, including zero rates. Israeli exports to the UK were worth £911 million in 2002.

This agreement forms part of the broader relationship between the EU and 12 Mediterranean countries, known as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Through a series of Association Agreements, each country will gain access to the EU market on an equal and non-discriminatory basis.

Cote d'Ivoire

Mr. Roy: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had concerning the disarmament of rebel opposition forces in the Ivory Coast. [160267]

Mr. Mullin: UK officials and Ministers have regular discussions with key partners on a range of issues related to the peace process.

The UK fully supports the Linas Marcoussis Agreement (LMA) as the basis for sustainable peace in Cote d'Ivoire. The LMA provides for a disarmament process, as well as a programme of legislation to address the underlying causes of the crisis. We welcome the steps that have been taken in recent months on both these issues. It is important that disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration, and progress in the wider peace process, continue in parallel. We urge all parties concerned to make early progress.

Caribbean

Derek Conway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many representations he has received on the implications for British posts in the Caribbean region of his Department's paper on UK International Priorities, a Strategy for the FCO. [160562]

Mr. Rammell: I understand that we have received one such representation since the publication of the White Paper, UK International Priorities: A Strategy for the FCO on 2 December 2003.

Derek Conway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what deadline he has set for responses to his paper on UK International Priorities, a Strategy for the FCO; and whether the paper will be discussed at the Caribbean Foreign Ministers forum in May. [160563]

Mr. Rammell: No deadline has been set for responses to the White Paper, UK International Priorities: A Strategy for the FCO. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will review the strategy every two years, inviting external contributions.

Discussion at the UK/Caribbean forum in May will focus on key areas of mutual interest, including security cooperation, trade policy and HIV/AIDS.

United Nations

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what mechanisms exist to establish a forum at United Nations level facilitating dialogue between aid representatives and representatives of governments. [160737]

Mr. Rammell: The United Nations organises many fora where aid representatives and representatives of government can hold a dialogue. We do not believe there is a need to establish new fora. Various UN funds and programmes and specialised agencies work in the development area; the regular meetings of their governing bodies allow a dialogue between the organisations concerned and member states. The General Assembly and Economic and Social Council of the UN frequently discuss development issues. At a country level, regular exchanges between aid representatives and donor governments take place on a bilateral and multilateral basis.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the level of public expenditure by the Office of the President of Zimbabwe. [160721]

Mr. Mullin: Comparison of the Zimbabwe state budget for 2004 with the original and supplementary budgets of 2003 shows a significant increase in provision for the Office of the President. We have not made an analysis of how this money is actually spent.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Zimbabwe Government about its *(a)* Public Order and Security Act and *(b)* Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. [160726]

Mr. Mullin: We have made the Government of Zimbabwe aware of our concerns about legislation, which is being used to suppress basic human rights such as freedom of speech and association, and freedom of the press.

EU Foreign Ministers, including my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, met on 23 February, and issued a strong statement condemning human rights abuses in Zimbabwe which drew specific attention to these Acts.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in *(a)* the European Union, *(b)* the United Nations and *(c)* the Commonwealth on the activities of the youth militia in Zimbabwe. [160730]

Mr. Mullin: The use by the Zimbabwe Government of youth militias (the so called "Green Bombers") for violence and intimidation of government opponents is well documented. We and our EU partners have called for the immediate closure of the youth training camps.

With our EU partners, we are discussing the tabling of a resolution on Zimbabwe at the UN Commission on Human Rights when it meets later this month. The intent is to highlight the level of human rights abuses in Zimbabwe and to call on the Government of Zimbabwe to take action.

Violence and human rights in Zimbabwe was a major theme of discussion at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Abuja in December, which decided to maintain Zimbabwe's suspension from the Councils of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the European Union about the list of persons from Zimbabwe banned from travelling to member states in the European Union. [160733]

Mr. Mullin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave to the right hon. and learned Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram) on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 96W.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the list published in the *Daily News* in Zimbabwe in 2003 of *(a)* police and *(b)* others who are suspected of human rights abuses. [160736]

Mr. Mullin: We take seriously information on reported human rights abusers in Zimbabwe such as those on the *Daily News* list. We will continue to make our concerns about the abuse of human rights clear to the Zimbabwe authorities.

CABINET OFFICE

Asbestos

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list the buildings occupied by his staff which require *(a)* remedial work on and *(b)* the removal of asbestos; what that work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys. [159362]

Mr. Alexander: None of the buildings occupied by Cabinet Office staff including the Government Car and Despatch Agency and Central Office of Information require remedial work in relation to the presence of asbestos. The Emergency Planning College in Easingwold has one residential building that requires the removal of asbestos and it is due to be demolished in September 2004. £10,500 has been set aside for the removal of asbestos from this building.

Future asbestos surveys will be funded as required from the estates maintenance budget.

Responsibility for buildings occupied but not controlled by Cabinet Office rests with the respective landlords.

Official Publications

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much the Department spent on official publications in each year since 1999. [159331]

Mr. Alexander: The details of my Department's spend on the production and purchase of all publications in each year from 1998–99 to 2003–04 can be found in the following table:

	Total (£000)
1998–99	2,013
1999–2000	2,815
2000–01	2,834
2001–02	2,751
2002–03	3,236
2003–04 (Estimated)	1,330

Public Service (Disqualification)

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office in which areas of public service and activity *(a)* illiteracy and *(b)* mental ill health are a disqualification from participation. [159341]

Mr. Alexander: Recruitment to the Civil Service and for public appointments is based on merit. Within the framework laid down by the Civil Service Order in Council 1995 and the Civil Service Commissioner's Recruitment Code, departments and agencies have the authority to prescribe qualifications for appointment to positions in their organisations in relation to age,

knowledge, ability, professional attainment, aptitude, potential, health and coping with the demands of the job.

Under the Civil Service Management Code, departments and agencies must ensure that their recruitment systems deliver recruits who are appropriate to their needs and who are able to do the work required subject to reasonable adjustments under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

When making public appointments, departments are required to follow the Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice to ensure appointment on merit. Criteria for selection can take account of the need to appoint boards that include a balance of skills and background.

Regulatory Impact Assessments

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what guidance his Department has issued on the provision of *(a)* an estimate of the cost of enforcement of regulation and *(b)* a description of how the regulation is to be monitored in regulatory impact assessments. [160130]

Mr. Alexander: In January 2003, the Cabinet Office issued 'Better Policy Making: A Guide to Regulatory Impact Assessment' detailed guidance on the regulatory impact assessment(RIA) process. This recommends that all RIAs should include analysis of the costs and benefits of proposals and set out the necessary monitoring and evaluation processes. Copies are available in the Libraries of the House. Revised web-based guidance, building on the January version, was issued by the Cabinet Office in November 2003. This can be found at www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/ria-guidance/

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many regulatory impact statements were issued by the Small Business Service in each year since 1998; and if he will make a statement. [160131]

Nigel Griffiths: I have been asked to reply.

The Small Business Service does not issue regulatory impact assessments.

DEFENCE

Airfield Support Services Project

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the original expected date was for announcing a decision on the Airfield Support Services Project; what the current expected date is; and what the reasons are for the delay. [160771]

Mr. Ingram: The Main Gate approval decision for the Airfield Support Services Project was originally envisaged for the first quarter of 2003. Although we are now moving towards this major decision stage, no decision has been made and I am not yet in a position to say exactly when this will be. The evaluation of this complex project has taken longer than anticipated. The time taken reflects the need to ensure that a fully informed decision is made.

Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what guidance his Department has issued to companies on Part 12 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001; [158309]

(2) what meetings his Department has held with companies to discuss *(a)* Part 12 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 and *(b)* corruption laws in the UK; and on what dates. [158310]

Mr. Ingram: Guidance in this area is a matter for the Department of Trade and Industry. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my noble Friend Lord Sainsbury of Turville on 4 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 120WA, in another place. The Ministry of Defence has not issued guidance or held meetings with United Kingdom companies in respect of the Act.

Arms Dealers

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether arms dealers whose commodities do not *(a)* originate in and *(b)* enter the UK are subject to end user certificate legislation; and if he will make a statement. [160192]

Nigel Griffiths: I have been asked to reply.

From 1 May 2004, controls will apply in certain cases in respect of military goods traded between countries outside the UK (controls on such trade to embargoed destinations came into force on 3 March 2004). End-user documentation requirements under the new trafficking and brokering controls will be similar to those currently in place under existing export controls.

Asbestos

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of buildings occupied by *(a)* his Department's staff and *(b)* staff of his Department's executive agencies have been surveyed to date for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to implementation of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159353]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence complies fully with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulation 2002, but there is no central register of surveyed buildings in which asbestos is known to be present belonging to the department or its agencies. Such a register or list could be compiled only at disproportionate cost. Once surveys have been undertaken, however, a management plan is produced by each establishment to ensure appropriate action is taken.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the buildings occupied by his departmental staff, including agencies, which require *(a)* remedial work on and *(b)* the removal of asbestos; what that work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys. [159360]

Mr. Caplin: There is no central register of surveyed buildings occupied by Departmental staff including agencies, which require either remedial work on or the removal of asbestos. Such a register or list could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

Continuous Attitudes Survey

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many times per annum the Continuous Attitudes Survey is distributed among *(a)* Royal Navy, *(b)* Army and *(c)* RAF personnel; how long assessment of the answers took on average for each round in each of the last four years; what the participation rate was in each of the last four years (i) in total numbers and (ii) as a percentage of distributed surveys each year for each of the three branches; and if he will make a statement. [160120]

Mr. Caplin: The Continuous Attitude Surveys (CAS) are run differently in the three Services.

Royal Navy

The RN CAS was distributed four times in the year 2000, three times in 2001 and twice in 2002 and 2003. The average time taken to process answers and conduct initial analysis of raw data is three months.

	Issues	*Number of questionnaires distributed*	*Number of responses received*	*Response rate (%)*
2000	January, April, July November	8,022	3,417	42.5
2001	March, July, December	6,000	2,713	45.2
2002	June, September	4,000	1,898	47.4
2003	January, September	5,027	2,321	46.1

Army

The Army CAS is distributed bi-annually. It takes approximately seven-eight months to collate the questionnaires, and complete the analysis.

The timing of survey distributions over the last four years has not been standardised. The following table shows response-rate figures by each survey distributed over the last four years.

Survey number	*Number of responses received*	*Response rate (%)*
SP1	2,634	57
SP2	2,110	53
SP3	2,037	51
SP4	1,753	44
SP5	2,324	48

RAF

The RAF CAS is issued four times per year, on the first working day of each February, May, August and November. A database of responses is prepared within three to four months of the survey's distribution. Analyses can be carried out at any time once the database is available. Response-rate statistics are set out in the following.

	Issues	*Number of questionnaires distributed*	*Number of responses received*	*Response rate (%)*
2000	February, May, August, November	8,000	4,691	58.6
2001	February, May, August, November	8,000	4,678	58.5
2002	February, May, August, November	8,000	4,528	56.6
2003	February, May, August[1]	6,000	3,090	51.5

[1] November data not yet available .

Defence Bills Agency

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many bills were processed by the Defence Bills Agency in fiscal year 2002–03; what the total value of the bills was; and what the total amount paid out was in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2001–02 and *(c)* 2000–01. [159243]

Mr. Caplin: In 2002–03, the Defence Bills Agency processed 4,537,462 bills. The value of the bills processed by DBA in each of the last three years was as follows:

	£ million
2002–03	17,462
2001–02	16,986
2000–01	15,914

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many bills pertaining to *(a)* companies based in Scotland and *(b)* procurement projects relating to bases in Scotland were processed by the Defence Bills Agency in fiscal year 2002–03; what the total value of the bills was; and what the total amount paid out was in (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2001–02 and (iii) 2000–01. [159244]

Mr. Caplin: The information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Defence-related Industries

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how his Department calculates the number of people employed in and by defence related industries in the regions of the UK; what multiplier is used; and what the *(a)* regional and *(b)* national totals are. [159306]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 12 December 2002, *Official Report*, column 418W in which the methodology was described. As indicated in this answer, a detailed report was being prepared. This is now available as Defence Statistics Bulletin 5. It has been published on the Defence Analytical Services Agency's website: www.dasa.mod.uk/statbulletin/bulletin5.pdf.

The latest estimate of the number of full time jobs supported in the UK by MOD expenditure and defence exports is around 295,000 in 2001–02. No estimate is currently available on the breakdown of employment numbers by region.

Eurofighter Typhoon

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what studies he has conducted on the impact on BAE *(a)* workflows and *(b)* employment prospects of the delay in agreeing the Tranche II order for Eurofighter Typhoons. [159498]

Mr. Ingram: As part of our approach defined in the Defence Industrial Policy Paper, we continually monitor with industry the effects of defence expenditure on the industrial base. However the direct impact on BAE systems of workflows and employment prospects are a matter for the company. Negotiations with our partner nations and industry on the Tranche II order for Typhoons are ongoing.

Gibraltar

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which Royal Navy ships will visit Gibraltar for the tercentenary celebrations. [160484]

Mr. Ingram: Plans have been made for the Royal Navy to support the tercentenary commemorations. I am withholding details of future ship programmes, under Exemption 1 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information for security reasons.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will visit Gibraltar in 2004. [160487]

Mr. Ingram: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement made to the House on 27 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 224–25 by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

Iraq

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his oral answer of 26 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 8, on Iraq, to the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Ms Taylor), what resources were in theatre but did not reach front-line forces in time for deployment. [151711]

Mr. Hoon *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* A full report on Operation TELIC entitled "Operations in Iraq: Lessons for the Future" can be found on the MOD's website (www.mod.uk in the "Publications and Reports" section). The report identifies several factors as being responsible for delivery problems that occurred in theatre. These include the asset tracking systems in place and the short period of time available for preparation and planning of deployment. Specific items that suffered from delivery problems in theatre include some vehicle spares and personal kit such as, desert combat clothing and Enhanced Combat Body Armour plates. Where there was a lack of equipment, priority was given to those personnel on the ground whom commanders judged to have the greatest need. We have drawn lessons from this and other recent operations, such as improving our asset tracking capability, and are always looking for ways in which to enhance our logistics performance.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his latest estimate is of civilian deaths arising from attacks by insurgents in the British zone in Southern Iraq since the official cessation of hostilities. [153872]

Mr. Ingram: It is not possible to estimate the number of civilian deaths which might be attributable to insurgent attacks.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 790W, on Iraq, how many rounds were issued to the Royal Military Police Personnel who lost their lives in Al Majarr Al Kabir on 24 June 2003; and if he will make a statement. [160227]

Mr. Ingram: A Board of Inquiry (BOI) is being convened today, to examine the circumstances in which the 6 Royal Military Policemen died. The BOI will address a wide-ranging series of questions including the issue of equipment to the men prior to their departure for Al Majarr Al Kabir. I would not wish to speculate on the BOFs conclusions.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many civil servants are searching for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. [160604]

Mr. Ingram: On 9 March 2004 there were 22 UK civil servants attached to the Iraq Survey Group, which is responsible for the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons the British members of the Iraq Survey Group have not been provided with direct access to the Iraqi Government declaration on its weapons of mass destruction programme dated 8 December 2002. [161188]

Mr. Hoon: The Iraqi Declaration on WMD programmes consists of 12,093 pages, some 3,500 of which are written in Arabic. The declaration covers Chemical Weapons, Biological Weapons, Nuclear and Missile activities. The full document is available in hard copy in London and Washington, with supporting documents and translations of relevant pages of Arabic available in soft copy. Although the ISG do not have immediate access to a full copy of the declaration, British members can access relevant parts through London, whenever they wish.

Met Office

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his estimate is of the asset value of the Meterological Office; what the cost in 2003–04 to his Department is of this organisation; and if he will make a statement. [156603]

Mr. Caplin: The Met Office operates as a Trading Fund and is self-financing.

The only direct cost of the Met Office to the Ministry of Defence as owner is a cost of capital charge which is made by the Treasury on all assets held by the MOD. The published accounts of the Met Office show that at 31 March 2003 its net assets were £159,498,000.

RAF St. Athan

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress is being made on the joint provision of leisure facilities at RAF St. Athan by the Ministry of Defence and the local authority for use by military and civilian personnel; and if he will make a statement. [160744]

Mr. Ingram: In December 2003, following discussions between MOD, the Welsh Development Agency and Vale of Glamorgan council officials, a firm of external consultants was appointed to undertake a study into the feasibility of a leisure centre that could be used by both Service personnel and the local community. They are due to report in April 2004.

Regimental Artefacts

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence apart from the colours displayed in Windsor

Castle, where the regimental silver and other artefacts of the Irish regiments disbanded in 1922 are held; and if he will make a statement. [158838]

Mr. Caplin: When the five Irish Infantry Regiments, together with the South Irish Horse, were disbanded in 1922, some items of Regimental memorabilia were reclaimed by donors or dispersed among former officers and NCOs. Some Regimental books were deposited at the Public Record Office, now the National Archives. Otherwise, the greater part of Mess silver and artefacts now belongs to the National Army Museum, which is the Regimental Museum for the disbanded Irish Regiments. Canadian silver and artefacts of the 1st Battalion Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadian) are now in the Museum of the Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario.

Territorial Army

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel *(a)* joined and *(b)* left the Territorial Army in each month during (i) 2002 and (ii) 2003, and what the reason for departure was in each case. [157149]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* Reliable inflow and outflow data for the TA are not currently available and for the same reason it is not possible to provide reasons for departure.

Warships

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what increase in capability would result from the upgrading of the gun turret on a Type 45 destroyer to house *(a)* a 127 mm and *(b)* a 155 mm gun, instead of a standard 115mm gun. [158141]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* The overall capability offered by the Type 45 destroyer's gun is not related simply to the calibre of the barrel, but to the ammunition which could be used.

The standard 115 mm (4.5") gun is capable of delivering conventional munitions to a range of up to 27 km. 127 mm and 155 mm guns would be capable of firing munitions to a range of 75–80 km. They would also be capable of firing modern guided munitions and, in the case of the 155 mm gun, these would be considerably heavier than the 115 mm gun's conventional munitions.

The design of the Type 45 includes space and weight margins which would allow for the fitting of an improved Medium Range Gun, should such a requirement emerge. There is no such requirement at present. In the case of a 155 mm gun, this would also depend on the maturity of its technology, as there are no such naval guns yet in service world-wide.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the expected decommissioning dates are of *(a)* HMS Newcastle, *(b)* HMS Cardiff, *(c)* HMS Glasgow, *(d)* HMS Liverpool, *(e)* HMS Norfolk and *(f)* HMS Iron Duke. [160772]

Mr. Ingram: The present decommissioning dates for each ship are as follows.

	Decommissioning dates
HMS Newcastle	2007
HMS Cardiff	2008
HMS Glasgow	2009
HMS Liverpool	2009
HMS Norfolk	2014
HMS Iron Duke	2020

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the Type-42 destroyers to be fitted with the Warship Electronic Chart Display and Information System. [160773]

Mr. Ingram: The Warship Electronic Chart Display and Information System (WECDIS) will be fitted to the following Type 42 Destroyers: HMS Exeter, HMS Liverpool, HMS Nottingham, HMS Southampton, HMS Edinburgh, HMS Gloucester, HMS Manchester and HMS York.

Wind Farms

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on the holding of low flying military exercises near renewable wind developments; [160259]

(2) if he will make a statement on the effect of renewable wind developments on military low flying exercises. [160268]

Mr. Caplin: The presence of wind farms in most areas of the UK presents no difficulty to low flying training providing pilots are aware of the existence and position of the developments. They are treated the same as any other obstruction; displayed on military low flying charts and published in the Military Aeronautical Planning Document Volume 3 Part 1. They are then taken into account during route planning and avoided by standard separation criteria, these vary according to the type of aircraft.

The Tactical Training Areas and the Electronic Warfare Training Range at Spadeadam in the English/Scottish border region are critical to low flying training because aircraft are allowed to fly at much lower levels. Within these areas an accumulation of wind turbines, particularly if combined with other obstacles, could give rise to concerns and could affect our ability to conduct operational flying training effectively. We are therefore more likely to raise objections to proposals for developments in these areas.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Census Returns

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the financial consequences of reducing the 100-year closure period for decennial population census records for England. [160430]

Mr. Leslie: Under Lord Chancellor's Instrument no.12 of 1966 the decennial census returns are closed for 100 years, on the grounds that they contain information

supplied in confidence. It would not, therefore, be appropriate to estimate the financial impact of earlier release dates.

Departmental Communications

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many staff are employed in the Department to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158173]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA), which includes its agencies—the Court Service and the Public Guardianship Office (PGO)—employs 60 staff in communications work. This figure comprises 24 staff of the Government Information and Communication Service (GICS) and 36 others.

	Number
Department for Constitutional Affairs HQ:	
(a) GICS staff:	
(i) Press Officers	13
(ii) Special Advisers	0
(iii) Others	11
(b) Other staff:	
(i) Press Officers	1
(ii) Special Advisers	2
(iii) Others	10
Court Service:	
(a) GICS staff:	
(i) Press Officers	0
(ii) Special Advisers	0
(iii) Others	0
(b) Other staff:	
(i) Press Officers	0
(ii) Special Advisers	0
(iii) Others	20
Public Guardianship Office:	
(a) GICS staff:	
(i) Press Officers	0
(ii) Special Advisers	0
(iii) Others	0
(b) Other staff:	
(i) Press Officers	1
(ii) Special Advisers	0
(iii) Others	2

Note:
'Others' includes staff working on publications, publicity, internal communications, websites and administration.

Court Buildings (Disabled Access)

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the court buildings that are not yet compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; and, for each such court, when his Department plans to comply with the Act. [160473]

Mr. Leslie: Taking the 1 April of 2004 as a baseline, the court buildings scheduled in the list will not be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 on that date. A plan of works is in hand to ensure that, with one exception, all these buildings will comply with the Act, in so far as is reasonable, by 30 September 2004. The one exception is the Crown court at Cardiff where it is not anticipated that the necessary works will be completed until 30 November 2004.

Midland Circuit

Boston county court
Burton county court
Buxton county court
Chesterfield county court
Evesham county court
Hereford Crown court
Kettering county court
Kidderminster county court
Leicester Crown court
Lincoln Crown court
Ludlow county court
Mansfield county court
Newark county court
Nottingham Crown and county courts
Nuneaton county court
Oswestry county court
Redditch county court
Shrewsbury county court
Shrewsbury Crown court
Stoke on Trent combined court centre
Stourbridge county court
Stratford upon Avon county court
Tamworth county court
Telford county court
Walsall county court
Warwick combined court centre
Warwick Shire Hall
Wellingborough county court
West Midlands court centre
Worksop county court

North Eastern Circuit

Bradford combined court
Dewsbury county court
Durham Crown court
Gateshead county court
Halifax county court
Rotherham county court
Scunthorpe county court
Sunderland county court
York County
York Crown

Northern Circuit

Accrington county court
Altrincham county court
Barrow in Furness county court
Birkenhead county court
Blackburn county court
Blackpool county court
Bolton combined court
Burnley combined court
Bury county court
Carlisle combined court
Chorley county court
Kendal county court

Lancaster county court
Lancaster Crown court
Leigh county court
Liverpool combined court
Manchester Crown court (Crown Square)
Manchester Crown court (Minshull Street)
Manchester county court
Nelson county court
Oldham county court
Penrith county court
Preston combined court
Preston Crown court (Sessions House)
Rawtenstall county court
St. Helens county court
Salford county court
Southport county court
Stockport county court
Tameside county court
Whitehaven county court
Wigan county court

South Eastern Circuit

Ashford county court
Aylesbury county court
Bedford county court
Bury St. Edmunds county court
Chichester combined court
Dartford county court
Eastbourne county court
Gravesend county court
Hastings county court
Hertford county court
Hitchin county court
Inner London Session House Crown court
Kings Lynn Crown court
Kings Lynn county court
Kingston Upon Thames county court
Lewes combined court
Lowestoft county court
Southend Crown court
Tunbridge Wells county court

Supreme Court Circuit

Barnet county court
Bow county court
Brentford county court
Central London county court
Central London Hearing Centre
Clerkenwell county court
Supreme Court Taxing Office (Clifford's Inn)
Edmonton county court
Ilford county court
Lambeth county court
Romford county court
Royal Courts of Justice
Shoreditch county court
Wandsworth county court
Technology and Construction Court (St. Dunstan's House)
West London county court
Willesden county court
Woolwich county court

Wales and Chester Circuit

Aberystwyth county court
Cardiff Crown court (1st November 2004)
Carmarthen county court
Chester Crown court
Newport Crown court
Northwich county court
Swansea Civil Justice Centre
Swansea Crown court
Welshpool County

Western Circuit

Aldershot county court
Barnstaple county court
Basingstoke county court
Bath county court
Bournemouth combined court
Bristol Guildhall
Dorchester combined court
Poole county court
Portsmouth combined court
Salisbury combined court
Southampton combined court
Southampton combined court (Western Range)
Swindon combined court
Trowbridge county court
Truro combined court
Weston-Super-Mare county court
Weymouth combined court
Winchester combined court

The magistrates courts have been excluded from the answer as they are presently the responsibility of the local Magistrates Courts Committees and no central records of this data are held.

Parliamentary Questions

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many Parliamentary Questions have been tabled to the Department or its predecessors since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days; and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157520]

Mr. Leslie: During the period 1 January 2003 to 24 February 2004, my Department has answered 963 ordinary written Parliamentary Questions of which 89 per cent. were answered within 10 days and 122 named day Parliamentary Questions of which 82 per cent. were answered on the specified date. My Department endeavours to answer all Parliamentary Questions within their deadlines.

Westminster Hall

Bob Spink: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make it the policy of the Department to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159609]

Mr. Lammy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by the Leader of the House on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Television Licence Fees

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* amount and *(b)* proportion of BBC licensing revenue was lost as a result of evasion in the last year for which figures are available. [160683]

Estelle Morris: As at March 2003, the estimated television licence evasion rate was 7.2 per cent., representing approximately £205 million in lost television licence fee revenue.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport for what proportion of television licence-holders the cost of their licence exceeded 2 per cent. of annual income in the last year for which figures are available. [160686]

Estelle Morris: The information requested is not available since TV Licensing, who administer the television licensing system for the BBC, do not maintain statistics on the income of licence fee payers.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many persons were *(a)* fined and *(b)* imprisoned for not having a television licence in 2003. [160687]

Estelle Morris: Home Office figures show that 94,590 defendants were fined for offences under the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949 to 1967 (mainly television licence evasion) in England-and Wales in 2002. Figures for 2003 will be published in late Autumn.

Custodial sentences are not available for television licence evasion, the maximum penalty being a fine. However, custodial sentences can be imposed for non-payment of such a fine. In 2003, 17 males and three females received custodial sentences for defaulting on the payment of a fine for TV Licence evasion.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many prosecutions there were for offences connected with television licensing in 2003. [160684]

Estelle Morris: TV Licensing, who administer the television licensing system for the BBC, gather these figures on a financial year basis. 149,000 people were prosecuted during 2002–03.

Cultural Programmes

Mr. Denis Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the UK bodies that have benefited from funding under *(a)* the Kaleidoscope Programme, *(b)* the Ariane Programme and *(c)* the Raphael Programme. [160940]

Estelle Morris: Neither this Department nor the European Commission maintain an electronic database of awards that were made under the Kaleidoscope, Ariane and Raphael cultural funding programmes. We have, however, asked Euclid, the UK's Cultural Contact Point, who maintain paper records of all awards made under the aforementioned programmes to compile a list of UK recipients.

The list is likely to be too extensive to be printed in full in the *Official Report* and therefore will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses by 19 March 2004. Euclid has already started work on compiling an electronic database for UK recipients of awards under the current Culture 2000 funding programme.

Edgworth Cricket and Recreation Club

Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the North West Regional Sports Board will reach a decision on the application from the Edgworth Cricket and Recreation Club for support for pavilion development. [161124]

Mr. Caborn: Sport England have advised that following the first meeting of the North West Regional Sports Board they wrote to Edgworth Cricket and Recreation Club on 5 February 2004 setting out the three funding options available to the Club in light of the current funding streams in the North West Region.

Entertainment Costs

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the costs to public funds was of parties held for the private offices of Ministers in her Department in the last five years. [157774]

Mr. Caborn: Since 2001 no parties have been held solely for the benefit of private office staff. From time to time private office staff are invited to attend certain functions held for external people.

No information is held for the period prior to 2001.

Libraries (Digitisation)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money has been spent on the digitisation of content in libraries in Crosby since 1997. [160451]

Estelle Morris: Sefton borough council is a partner in the Merseyside Gateway Project which received £370,000 from the New Opportunities Fund to create a website depicting the history and growth of the Port of Liverpool and its environs. Crosby library supplied around two-thirds of the local images supplied by Sefton to the website. The Council's contribution to the project was £5,000.

New Opportunities Fund (Buckingham)

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money from the New Opportunities Fund was allocated to Buckingham in each year since 1997. [161323]

Estelle Morris: The New Opportunities Fund began making grants in 1999. The awards to the Buckingham constituency are shown in the table which is derived from information supplied by the New Opportunities Fund.

	£
1999	26,850
2000	73,109
2001	5,000
2002	9,130
2003	128,658
To February 2004	0

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* solely state-financed and *(b)* public-private partnership and private finance initiative projects for which her Department is responsible have been launched in each region in each of the last 10 years. [160947]

Mr. Caborn: I refer my hon. Friend to HM Treasury's website which contains details of all signed PFI projects: <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public_private_partnerships/ppp_pfi_stats.cfm>. The list can be searched by Department and by region and it contains details of all PFI deals signed over the last 10 years, including the capital value of each project.

The information concerning solely state financed projects, and all public-private partnerships could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was spent by *(a)* the Government on solely state-financed projects and *(b)* the (i) Government and (ii) private sector on public-private and private finance initiative projects for which her Department is responsible, in each of the last 10 years, broken down by region. [160948]

Mr. Caborn: I refer my hon. Friend to HM Treasury's website which contains details of all signed PFI projects: <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public_private_partnerships/ppp_pfi_stats.cfm>. The list can be searched by Department and by region and it contains details of all PFI deals signed over the last 10 years.

The information concerning solely state financed projects, and all public-private partnerships could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Television Ownership

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate her Department has made of the number of households who do not own a television in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland. [160703]

Estelle Morris: The information requested is not available since TV Licensing, who administer the television licensing system for the BBC, do not maintain statistics on television ownership in the individual nations of the United Kingdom. However, in the UK as a whole, an estimated 2 per cent. of households do not have a television set.

Tourism (Regional Development Agencies)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the work of regional development agencies in developing tourism in Crosby. [160564]

Mr. Caborn: The North West Development Agency (NWDA) is working closely with The Mersey Partnership (TMP), the nominated Destination Management Organisation (DMQ) for Merseyside.

During 2003–04 TMP received £320,000 from NWDA's Marketing Image Budget for tourism and investment campaigns to promote Merseyside, including Crosby. In addition, £419,000 was provided from NWDA's Tourism budget for a variety of projects. However, NWDA does not have a specific breakdown of funding provided to the area at this stage.

NWDA has also supported a programme for the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park, which covers an area from Southport to Wirral, including Crosby. The programme is aimed at transforming and energising the Mersey Waterfront to produce a unique sense of place for people to live, work, visit and invest in Merseyside.

Weymouth Transmitter

Jim Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether planned upgrades to the Weymouth transmitter will enable the broadcast of digital signal prior to turning off the analogue signal. [161056]

Estelle Morris: The Weymouth site has recently been updated to transmit digital radio. However, until analogue signals are switched off there will be no frequencies available to broadcast digital television services from the Weymouth transmitter without causing interference to viewers' existing analogue signals.

Jim Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which broadcasters are responsible for the upgrading of the Weymouth transmitter to enable digital broadcasting. [161057]

Estelle Morris: The Weymouth site is owned by Crown Castle but ntl also use the transmitter. Upgrading is therefore their joint responsibility on behalf of the multiplex operators (BBC, Digital 3/4, SDN and Crown Castle International) under Ofcom's regulation.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Casinos

Sue Doughty: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what account regional development agencies take of the prevention of proliferation in problem gambling when assessing proposed large regional casino schemes. [158314]

Jacqui Smith: I have been asked to reply.

The consideration of where large regional casino schemes should be encouraged falls to regional planning bodies (RPBs) rather than regional development agencies (RDAs), as it is RPBs that prepare regional planning guidance.

Child Poverty

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020, *(b)* halving it by 2010 and *(c)* reducing it by a quarter by 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [154370]

Yvette Cooper: I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer given by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Pond) on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1590W.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150266]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1294W.

Care Homes (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether his Department sanctioned Gloucestershire county council's accumulation of uncollected rents from Coverage Care (Gloucestershire) Ltd.; and what steps his Department is taking in the matter; [155230]

(2) what financial guarantees he has approved Gloucestershire county council to make in order for *(a)* Coverage Care (Gloucestershire) Ltd. and *(b)* a successor body to continue to operate elderly care homes; [155231]

(3) what contingency arrangements his Department has made to prevent closure of care homes run by Coverage Care (Gloucestershire) Ltd.; what liabilities will be undertaken by Gloucestershire county council; and whether any liabilities will be funded by council tax revenues. [155232]

Yvette Cooper: Section 25 of the Local Government Act 1988 requires the consent of the Secretary of State to be obtained if a local authority decides to give financial assistance in connection with elderly persons' residential accommodation.

The Secretary of State consented to Gloucestershire county council giving financial assistance in 1994 when the current arrangements with Coverage Care (Gloucestershire) Ltd were entered into. In 1999, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister granted a general consent to all local authorities in England to give financial assistance in various circumstances. No other consent has been sought by the Council or granted. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not sanctioned the accumulation of uncollected rents from Coverage Care.

Powers to make arrangements for residential care are vested in local authorities and therefore it is the responsibility of Gloucestershire county council to deliver this service to the public. Consequently, it is not for Government to make contingency arrangements.

Housing (Buckingham)

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on how the change in the level of central Government funding for local authority financed housing has affected the residents of Buckingham since 1997. [161468]

Keith Hill: Buckingham is within the district of Aylesbury Vale. Aylesbury Vale district council received housing capital allocations of £1.7 million in 1997–98, rising to £6.1 million in 2004–05. This is an increase of 250 per cent. over the period.

How these allocations have been spent in relation to the residents of Buckingham is a matter for Aylesbury Vale district council.

Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how public participation is implemented in the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme; and if he will make a statement on how the scheme is progressing. [161192]

Mr. Raynsford: Decisions to award Quality parish status are taken by county accreditation panels established through the National Association of Local Councils and approved by Government. To gain Quality status a parish or town council must demonstrate that they effectively communicate and actively engage with the electorate they represent, including having a majority of their seats filled through election.

There has been considerable interest in the scheme since its launch last year, and so far 36 councils have been granted Quality status.

Radon Tests

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make legislative provision for *(a)* radon tests to be carried out on (i) old and (ii) new homes and *(b)* to require a radon test certificate to be furnished at the time of conveyancing. [161517]

Phil Hope: There are no plans for legislation to require radon testing of homes.

(i) In the case of homes built without radon protection, successive governments have run a radon measurement programme to identify the extent of the radon problem. In the last eight years it has mainly focused on homes likely to be at most risk. In England, where the problem is estimated to be greatest, and in Northern Ireland, that has meant every home with a greater than 5 per cent. probability of having radon concentrations at or above the National Radiological Protection Board recommended level of 200 becquerels per cubic metre of air, has been offered a free radon test. The Government's current programme continues to

offer free tests to the homes at most at risk. This targeting has encouraged the more at risk householders to undertake radon remediation. This is an approach that has been tested and shown that it can double the amount of remediation in homes where there is greatest risk from this naturally occurring radioactive gas.

Under the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's proposals for home information packs, the pack is likely to include information on whether the property is located within a radon affected area. Issues of practicality and cost suggest that it would not be appropriate to require radon testing as part of a statutory home information pack scheme. However, this will be considered further by specialist working groups that are being set up to consider the contents of the pack before any final decisions are taken.

(ii) Post completion tests of houses that include radon measures had demonstrated that the level of protection is adequate and it would be uneconomic to test every house. Of the few houses where the radon levels have risen after occupation all but one were due to alterations to the house and the increase level in the remaining house was due to the use of a method of protection that is not recommended in official guidance.

(b) The revised questions in the searches form used in conveyancing are much more pointed in relation to radon and ask about radon tests and radon proofing. As the standardised procedures relating to house purchases address radon much more effectively than was the case in the past, there is no case to require test certificates through legislation.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received from the Electoral Commission concerning the publication of information by the Government during the period prior to the referendums on the proposed elected regional assemblies. [159825]

Mr. Raynsford: Sam Younger, Chairman of the Electoral Commission, wrote to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in January about the timing of the Government's information campaign about elected regional assemblies. He suggested that the Government's information campaign should stop once the referendum period begins.

In my reply, I have pointed out that during the course of the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister undertook to deliver a leaflet providing information about the referendum issues to every household in the regions affected. It is not feasible for us to print or deliver that leaflet before the referendums have been called and the date of those referendums is settled. This commitment to Parliament could not be honoured if Mr. Younger's suggestion was followed.

Section 125 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) requires the Government to stop providing information 28 days before the close of poll. However, we intend these referendums to be conducted by all-postal ballot, which means that voters will receive their ballot papers, and be able to vote, up to three weeks before close of poll. We have therefore indicated to the Chairman of the Electoral Commission our intention to stop our information campaign 28 days before the first day that ballot papers can be dispatched. This complies with both the letter and the spirit of the PPERA and enables our commitment to Parliament to be honoured.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to ensure that arguments *(a)* in favour of and *(b)* against elected regional assemblies will be put to the public at the regional hearings he is conducting in the next two months. [159829]

Mr. Raynsford: The regional hearings are to enable Ministers to hear views from members of the public, and others, about the proposed powers of elected regional assemblies. They are not about presenting arguments in favour of or against elected assemblies. However, representatives from both the yes and no campaigns have been invited to attend the hearings as they are key stakeholders in the regions.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the proposed Government grants of £780 million for the North West Region, £350 million for the North East Region and £570 million for Yorkshire and the Humber Region are subject to financial restraints for allocation and use; and by whom they are controlled. [160755]

Mr. Raynsford: The finance powers of elected regional assemblies were set out in Chapter 5 of the White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions" (Cm. 5511).

The Government want to give elected regional assemblies the maximum flexibility over how they spend the money allocated to them. It would constrain an assembly unduly if grants were to be ear-marked by central Government for specific purposes. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister therefore proposes to give regional assemblies a single block grant with freedom to spend money as they judge best.

In return, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will expect each assembly to help achieve in their region a small number of targets agreed with the Government and relevant to an assembly's responsibilities. Some additional money will be available to reward elected assemblies which achieve or exceed the targets.

Local Councillors (Anonymous Complaints)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many anonymous complaints have been made against local government councillors to the Standards Board for England since its inception; how many of these have been investigated; and which councils were involved. [155170]

Mr. Raynsford: Out of 5,819 allegations received by the Standards Board for England up to January 2004, 14 have been anonymous. Of these, three were referred for investigation. Two of these related to Councillors in Sedgefield borough council and the third to a Councillor in Selatynn and Gobowan Parish Council.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Working Time Directive

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many residents of Crosby have benefited from a reduction of the working week to 48 hours. [160542]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Working Time Regulations provide workers with the right not to work more than 48 hours if they want to. Numbers for Crosby are not available, however it has been estimated that around 50,000 workers resident in Merseyside stood to benefit from the introduction of the weekly working time limits in 1998.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the benefits to residents of Crosby of new rights for night-shift workers. [160527]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Working Time Regulations limit working time to 48 hours per week averaged over a 17-week reference period. For night workers the limit is eight hours per day on average, including overtime where it is part of a night worker's normal hours of work. There is no opt-out from the night working time limit.

Night workers are entitled to 11 hours rest between working days, one day's rest per week, and a 20-minute in work rest break if the working period is longer than 6 hours.

All night workers should be offered a free health assessment before they start working night and thereafter at regular intervals for as long as they are working nights. The health assessments should take account of the nature of the work and the restrictions on a worker's working time under the regulations. Workers who suffer from problems as a result of working at night, should as far as practicable be offered alternative day work.

All workers are entitled to four weeks paid annual leave. There are no specific data available for night shift workers in Crosby.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many residents of Crosby benefit from the right to four weeks' paid holiday. [160540]

Mr. Sutcliffe: All workers resident in Crosby benefit from the right to four weeks paid holiday set out in the Working Time Regulations.

Disciplinary and Grievance Hearings

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many residents of Crosby have benefited from new rights to representation at *(a)* disciplinary and *(b)* grievance hearings. [160541]

Mr. Sutcliffe: A worker has the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or trade union official when asked by his or her employer to attend a disciplinary or grievance hearing. There are no estimates of the number of Crosby residents who have exercised this right since it came into force in September 2000.

Employment Rights Advice

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost in 2003–04 is to her Department of producing, in *(a)* internet and *(b)* paper format, advice on individual employment rights. [159684]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Figures are not available on the cost of providing advice on individual employment rights on the internet and could not be provided cost-effectively.

DTI anticipate costs for producing employment rights booklets for 2003–04 in paper format in the region of £460,000. Acas estimate that it will cost £265,000 for their employment rights publications. This does not include the cost of advice on new or changed rights.

Renewable Energy Initiative

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1285W, on renewable energy, how much the Renewable Energy Initiative has cost to date; and how much is budgeted to be spent in the future. [160995]

Mr. Timms: As indicated in my previous answer, the Renewable Energy Initiative focuses on raising awareness. The costs are subsumed within existing administration budgets and are not separately identifiable.

Once any business is underwritten by ECGD it would be logged as a contingent liability rather than expenditure.

EU Structural Funds

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much funding has been *(a)* applied for and *(b)* paid out to each region from European Union Structural Funds to date; and how much it is planned that each region will get in total from these funds. [161126]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 12 March 2004]:* Details of the amounts of European Structural Funds applied for and paid out to each region since the Funds first became available in the United Kingdom are not kept centrally. Compiling these figures now could be done only disproportionate cost.

However, I can provide the allocation by region of Structural Funds for the period 2000–06, which is shown in the following table:

UK Structural Funds Allocations—Including Community Initiatives 2000–06

£ million

2000 Prices	*SPDs*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*
Objective 1								
Merseyside	808.1	113.3	115.8	118.1	120.3	111.1	113.7	115.8
South Yorkshire	710.6	99.6	101.8	103.9	105.8	97.7	99.9	101.8
Cornwall	301.7	42.3	43.2	44.1	44.9	41.5	42.4	43.2
Total Objective 1 England	1,820.4	255.2	260.9	266.2	266.2	250.3	256.0	260.9
West Wales and The Valleys	1,123.3	157.4	161.0	164.2	167.2	154.5	158.0	161.0
Total Objective 1	2,943.7	412.6	421.8	430.4	438.2	404.8	414.0	421.8
Objective 1 Transitional								
Highlands & Islands	187.0	54.0	45.8	37.5	28.5	15.5	5.8	—
N. Ireland	539.7	155.7	132.3	108.1	82.4	44.6	16.6	—
Total Objective 1 Trans	726.7	209.7	178.1	145.5	110.9	60.0	22.4	—
Objective 2								
East Midlands	203.1	28.5	29.1	29.7	30.2	27.9	28.6	29.1
East of England	84.0	11.8	12.0	12.3	12.5	11.6	11.8	12.0
London	154.7	21.7	22.2	22.6	23.0	21.3	21.8	22.2
North East	411.1	57.6	58.9	60.1	61.2	56.5	57.8	58.9
North West	392.1	55.0	56.2	57.3	58.4	53.9	55.1	56.2
South East	16.1	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.3
West Midlands	437.6	61.3	62.7	64.0	65.1	60.2	61.5	62.7
South West	106.1	14.9	15.2	15.5	15.8	14.6	14.9	15.2
Yorkshire & Humberside	280.7	39.3	40.2	41.0	41.8	38.6	39.5	40.2
Total England	2,085.5	292.3	298.9	304.9	3,10.5	286.8	293.3	298.9
Eastern Scotland	102.1	14.3	14.6	14.9	15.2	14.0	14.4	14.6
South Scotland	43.2	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	5.9	6.1	6.2
Western Scotland	222.7	31.2	31.9	32.6	33.2	30.6	31.3	31.9
Total Scotland	368	51.6	52.7	53.8	54.8	50.6	51.8	52.7
East Wales	49.3	6.9	7.1	7.2	7.3	6.8	6.9	7.1
Gibraltar	5.1	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7
Total Objective 2	2,507.9	351.8	359.4	366.7	373.3	344.9	352.7	359.4
Objective 2 Transitional								
East Midlands	25.1	7.2	6.2	5.0	3.8	2.1	0.8	—
East of England	10.8	3.1	2.6	2.2	1.6	0.9	0.3	—
London	2.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.1	—
North East	23.4	6.8	5.7	4.7	3.6	1.9	0.7	—
North West	97.8	28.2	24.0	19.6	14.9	8.1	3.0	—
South East	5.5	1.6	1.3	1.1	0.8	0.5	0.2	—
West Midlands	80.1	23.1	19.6	16.0	12.2	6.6	2.5	—
South West	8.9	2.6	2.2	1.8	1.4	0.7	0.3	—
Yorkshire & Humberside	33.1	9.5	8.1	6.6	5.1	2.7	1.0	—
Total England Objective 2 Transitional	287.5	82.9	70.5	57.6	43.9	23.8	8.9	—
Eastern Scotland	*49.7*	*14.3*	*12.2*	*10.0*	*7.6*	*4.1*	*1.5*	—
South Scotland	1.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0	—
Western Scotland	70.2	20.3	17.2	14.1	10.7	5.8	2.2	—
Total Scotland Objective 2 Trans	1,21.1	34.9	29.7	24.3	18.5	10.0	3.7	—
East Wales	24.1	7.0	5.9	4.8	3.7	2.0	0.7	—
Total Objective 2 Trans	4,32.7	124.8	106.1	86.7	66.1	35.8	13.3	—
Objective 3								
East Midlands	167.9	23.5	24.1	24.5	25.0	23.1	23.6	24.1
East of England	175.7	24.6	25.2	25.7	26.2	24.2	24.7	25.2
London	383.9	53.8	55.0	56.1	57.1	52.8	54.0	55.0
North East	184.0	25.8	26.4	26.9	27.4	25.3	25.9	26.4
North West	236.2	33.1	33.8	34.5	35.2	32.5	33.2	33.8
South East	215.3	30.2	30.9	31.5	32.1	29.6	30.3	30.9
West Midlands	272.2	38.2	39.0	39.8	40.5	37.4	38.3	39.0
South West	128.7	18.0	18.4	18.8	19.2	17.7	18.1	18.4
Yorkshire & Humberside	175.4	24.6	25.1	25.6	26.1	24.1	24.7	25.1
Central Funding	498.4	69.9	71.4	72.9	74.2	68.5	70.1	71.4
Technical Assistance	49.8	7.0	7.1	7.3	7.4	6.8	7.0	7.1
Total England	2,487.5	348.7	356.5	363.7	3703	342.0	349.9	356.5
Total Scotland	302.7	42.4	43.4	44.3	45.1	41.6	42.6	43.4
East Wales	74.4	10.4	10.7	10.9	11.1	10.2	10.5	10.7
Gibraltar	4.2	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Total Objective 3	2,868.8	402.1	411.1	419.4	427.1	394.5	403.5	411.1
England	6,680.9	979.1	986.7	992.3	995.6	902.9	908.1	916.2
Wales	1271.1	181.7	184.6	187.1	189.3	173.5	176.1	178.7

UK Structural Funds Allocations—Including Community Initiatives 2000–06

£ million

2000 Prices	*SPDs*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*
Scotland	978.8	182.9	171.6	159.8	146.9	117.7	103.8	96.1
Ireland	539.7	155.7	132.3	108.1	82.4	44.6	16.6	0.0
Gibraltar	9.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3
Total	9,479.8	1,500.7	1,476.5	1,448.7	1,415.6	1,239.9	1,206.0	1,192.4
Community Initiatives								
Leader +	68.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Interreg III	233.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Equal	227.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Urban	75.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total CIs	604.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Israel

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the value in each of the last five years of *(a)* EU exports to Israel and *(b)* Israeli exports to the EU. [160158]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Data on the EU's trade with Israel are given in the following table.

EU15 countries trade in goods with Israel 1998–2002

£ million

	EU exports to Israel	*EU imports from Israel*
1998	7,360	4,677
1999	8,464	5,032
2000	9,662	6,071
2001	8,984	5,945
2002	8,444	5,373

Source:
Eurostat Intra and Extra EU Trade

Manufacturing

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the levels of *(a)* manufacturing output and *(b)* employment in the manufacturing sector were in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough in each of the last five years. [158452]

Ruth Kelly: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Simon Hughes dated 15 March 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on levels of *(a)* manufacturing output and *(b)* employment in the manufacturing sector in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London Borough in each of the last five years. I am replying in his absence. (158452)

The information given in the attached tables on employment and Gross Value Added (GVA) in the manufacturing sector is taken from the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI). Data on GVA are provided from 1998 to 2001, the most recent year for which estimates are available. Data on employment are provided from 1998 to 2002, although estimates for 2002 are provisional. Data have not been supplied prior to 1998 since this was the first year in which the ABI was carried out; 1997 data would be from a different data collection exercise and would therefore not be comparable. The Annual Business Inquiry samples businesses on a national level stratified by country (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) as well as by industrial classification and size band. Outputs are primarily produced at national level, with sub-national outputs (as shown in the tables) produced subsequently using a regression model to apportion the data to local units. All sub-national data should therefore be treated with caution. This particularly applies to borough-level data since small area estimates have greater sampling and modelling uncertainty.

Approximate Gross Value Added represents the income generated by businesses, encompassing wages and salaries, the cost of capital investment and financial charges, and profit. It includes taxes on production (e.g. business rates) net of subsidies but excludes subsidies and taxes on products (e.g. VAT and excise duty). The estimates shown are at current prices and hence are not adjusted for inflation The estimates for the number of employees by area are based on the location of the employing company, but it must be emphasised that they are derived from a regression model and are not actual counts of employees.

Gross Value Added (GVA)[1] at current[2] basic prices by the manufacturing sector[3] in Greater London and in London boroughs, 1998–2001

£ million

	Gross Value Added (GVA) at basic prices			
Area	1998	1999	2000	2001
Greater London	13404.4	14274.8	13050.1	13606.2
London Boroughs				
Barking and Dagenham	1179.7	838.2	372.3	381.5
Barnet	150.8	153.8	132.6	147.5
Bexley	329.1	400.2	329.4	446.0
Brent	588.9	551.7	500.7	527.9
Bromley	194.9	206.2	183.0	262.7
Camden	598.1	665.2	702.8	700.1
City of London	212.0	174.5	188.7	167.5
Croydon	378.6	431.4	378.5	336.2
Ealing	618.0	846.3	797.1	1155.5
Enfield	479.8	487.3	410.6	404.5
Greenwich	425.1	388.5	483.9	244.6
Hackney	346.0	321.4	276.8	277.9
Hammersmith and Fulham	280.0	351.0	460.8	518.9
Haringey	264.2	265.4	214.9	223.8
Harrow	435.5	691.4	305.6	203.1
Havering	234.9	270.4	208.8	230.9
Hillingdon	607.6	727.1	726.0	1070.9
Hounslow	526.1	481.7	611.6	470.1
Islington	419.7	475.6	476.2	520.8
Kensington and Chelsea	337.9	316.3	285.5	295.1
Kingston upon Thames	222.8	242.4	265.0	271.2
Lambeth	152.0	159.0	149.2	159.5
Lewisham	99.3	112.4	107.1	127.3
Merton	318.4	462.7	292.6	307.6
Newham	288.9	434.3	303.1	331.8
Redbridge	159.0	171.0	163.2	161.2
Richmond upon Thames	185.5	275.6	291.5	244.8
Southwark	614.6	746.7	814.9	669.7
Sutton	202.4	238.0	218.4	253.4
Tower Hamlets	1129.1	948.7	1128.1	1062.1
Waltham Forest	251.9	281.9	242.9	230.8
Wandsworth	181.1	181.0	189.4	199.4
Westminster	992.5	977.8	839.0	1001.9

Source:
ONS Annual Business Inquiry

[1] Gross Value Added (GVA) was used as the most appropriate measure of manufacturing output as it excludes intermediate consumption that could lead to double counting
[2] Current price estimates are not adjusted to take account of inflation
[3] The data provided are for the manufacturing sector defined as sector D (Manufacturing) in the Standard Industrial Classification 1992 (SIC92)

Employment

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many manufacturing jobs have been lost so far in 2004 in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland. [160258]

Jacqui Smith: Estimates of the change in the number of workforce jobs in manufacturing are not yet available for 2004. The Office for National Statistics will publish workforce jobs estimates for March 2004 for manufacturing by region in July 2004.

Mark Gilbert Morse Solicitors

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many chronic obstructive pulmonary disease claims have been settled with her Department by Mark Gilbert Morse Solicitors of Newcastle. [159468]

Nigel Griffiths: As of 31 January 2004 the Department had settled 5,227 claims with Mark Gilbert Morse solicitors.

Maternity Leave

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many and what percentage of women in Crosby have taken 26 weeks maternity leave since 1997. [160521]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Take-up of maternity leave is not recorded centrally. It is possible to make an estimate of the numbers of women taking maternity leave based on employer returns to Inland Revenue for payment of Statutory Maternity Pay (since 2003 this has covered the first 26 weeks of leave). However, figures for the take-up of SMP are not available on a regional basis.

In addition, there will be some women who will qualify for maternity leave but not SMP (because they do not meet the earnings criteria) and similarly some who qualify for SMP but not leave (because they are employed earners for the purposes of SMP but not employees in order to qualify for leave).

Miners' Compensation

Mr. Denis Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much compensation has been paid to claimants in the Wansbeck constituency for *(a)* vibration white finger and *(b)* chronic bronchitis and emphysema. [159584]

Nigel Griffiths: Figures as of 31 January 2004 are:

£ million

	Total amount paid
Respiratory disease	11.9
Vibration white finger (VWF)	26.7

Constituency figures can be found on the DTI website www.dti.gov.uk/coalhealth. The information is compiled in the middle of the month and shows the figures for the end of the previous month.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many mining compensation claims have reached full and final settlement using the interim pensions spreadsheet. [159591]

Nigel Griffiths: As at 7 March 2004, 23,438 respiratory disease claims had received a full and final settlement in respect of pension loss. The Department does not distinguish between claims settled using the pension calculator and claims settled using the pension loss speadsheet. However, claimants who accept a pension loss payment using the spreadsheet have the option of accepting that payment in full and final settlement of pension loss, or accepting that payment as an interim award and claiming a top-up payment if appropriate once the pension calculator has been finalised.

Mr. Denis Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many claims have been received for chronic bronchitis and emphysema. [159692]

Nigel Griffiths: As of 29 February 2004, the Department had received nearly 463,000 claims for respiratory disease.

Nuclear Industry

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions her Department has had about the future of nuclear power generation in the UK. [161003]

Mr. Timms: The Department has many discussions with the nuclear industry and with other interested groups, in some of which the future of nuclear power generation in the UK has been raised. The Government's policy on new nuclear build remains as set out in the Energy White Paper.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much revenue has been received by BNFL for dealing with imported nuclear waste; and if she will make a statement. [153372]

Mr. Timms: The UK does not import nuclear waste.

As far as spent nuclear fuel is concerned, THORP's order book amounts to some £12 billion. Details of payments for BNFL's reprocessing services are commercial matters for BNFL and its customers.

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with *(a)* the Scottish Executive and *(b)* Members of the Scottish Parliament about the future management of Scotland's nuclear waste. [161005]

Mr. Timms: There is regular contact between my Department and the Scottish Executive on a range of issues relating to radioactive waste management policy.

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what provision will be made in the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's Segregated Account for the very long-term management of radioactive waste. [160656]

Mr. Timms: The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) will be a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) financed by the Government in the usual way.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Funding Account (NDFA) will record all the income and expenditure associated with the discharge of the NDA's responsibilities as set out in the Energy Bill and be maintained at a sufficient level to support NDA activity over the long-term. This includes securing the treatment, storage, transportation and disposal of radioactive waste.

Skills Base

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her assessment is of employers' demand for employees with *(a)* high, *(b)* intermediate and *(c)* lower level qualifications, broken down as a percentage of the UK workforce. [158853]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I refer to my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State's reply to the hon. Member's Question No. 155288 answered on 24 February, *Official Report*, column 396W, which set out how we seek to understand and raise employer demand for skills by working with the Sector Skills Development Agency and the Skills for Business Network to ensure that employers have the skills they require both now and in the future.

My right hon. Friend Secretary of State for Education and Skills may be able to offer further evidence on demand for qualifications but I refer you to the publication "Skills in England—2002" and the following table 6.11 gives the projected change in employment by qualifications from 1999 to 2010.

Table 6.11 Projected Employment by Qualification, 1999–2010

	Level 5		Level 4		Level 3	
Region	*1999 (Thousand)*	*Percentage ch.*	*1999 (Thousand)*	*Per cent. ch.*	*1999 (Thousand)*	*Percentage. ch.*
London	328	36.9	1,123	42.4	615	-1.0
South East	173	34.1	866	38.9	750	14.1
East of England	100	34.0	468	38.5	445	8.8
South West	92	33.7	499	33.1	440	13.6
West Midlands	86	19.8	438	30.1	433	4.4
East Midlands	59	30.5	344	30.8	387	5.4
Yorkshire and The Humber	86	20.9	436	26.2	402	6.7
North West	107	29.0	603	28.2	586	2.7
North East	29	20.7	184	22.8	204	0.5
United Kingdom	1,237	30.8	5,864	33.2	5,099	5.4

Table 6.11 Projected Employment by Qualification, 1999–2010

	Level 2		Level 1		No qualifications	
	1999 (Thousand)	*(Percentage) ch.*	*1999 (Thousand)*	*Percentage ch.*	*1999 (Thousand)*	*Percentage ch.*
London	834	-9.7	802	-8.4	433	-25.4
South East	906	2.1	844	10.9	405	-17.8
East of England	592	5.1	564	9.6	271	-10.3
South West	533	4.1	511	12.9	236	-30.9
West Midlands	558	-0.7	541	10.2	390	-41.3
East Midlands	410	0.7	433	13.6	262	-26.0
Yorkshire and The Humber	496	-2.0	505	13.9	307	-25.4
North West	683	-1.8	618	7.6	383	-36.0
North East	237	0.0	230	11.3	141	-34.0
United Kingdom	6,172	-0.9	5,778	8.2	3,388	-26.5

Note
Level 2 and below are regarded as lower level qualifications, Level 3/4 (e.g. A'levels and HNDs) as intermediate qualifications and Level 4 (degrees)/level 5 (higher degrees) as higher level qualifications
Source:
Wilson (2001b) Table 14, Page 19.

Small Business

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her estimate is of the *(a)* number and *(b)* economic input of small businesses employing fewer than 10 people in the United Kingdom in the last year for which figures are available. [160133]

Nigel Griffiths: At the start of 2002 there were an estimated 3,596,855 businesses in the private sector (including public corporations and nationalised bodies) in the United Kingdom employing fewer than 10 people. This was 95 per cent. of the total number of UK private sector businesses.

These businesses employing fewer than 10 people had an estimated combined turnover of £482,984 million. This was 22 per cent. of the total turnover in UK private sector businesses.

These are the latest figures available.

EU Telecoms Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the outcome was of the Telecommunications Council held on 8 March; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [161443]

Mr. Timms: I attended the Telecoms Council held on 8 March 2004 in Brussels. There was a round-table debate on the state of the telecoms sector, in particular on two areas for action by governments; the transposition of the new regulatory framework and implementing national broadband strategies. There was broad consensus that the sector was recovering, that compelling content would be key in driving take-up of broadband and that e-Government was important as driver and exemplar in services. The rollout of broadband in under served areas was also discussed, including the importance of applying structural funding in a technology-neutral, market-led and competition-based way.

I pointed out that in the face of increasingly stiffer international competition it was vital for the EU to make the most of its competitive edge from creating the largest single coherent telecoms market by implementing the new regulatory package in a timely, consistent and effective way. I emphasised the need for a vision and specific planning beyond 2005 to meet the Lisbon goal by 2010 of Europe becoming the world's knowledge-based leader. To achieve this, I stressed the importance of intensifying dialogue with industry across the whole value chain. The Presidency will submit the Conclusions of this Council discussion to the Spring European Council on 25–26 March.

The Presidency will also submit to the Spring European Council the Council Conclusions on the following items, which were agreed without substantial debate; the e-Europe 2005 Mid-Term, unsolicited communications for direct marketing purposes, or "spam" and on the following-up to the World Summit on the Information Society.

Ukraine

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she *(a)* has had and *(b)* plans with the government of Ukraine concerning opportunities to sell Ukrainian products within the European Union; and if she will make a statement. [159543]

Ms Hewitt: The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has had no recent discussions with members of the Ukraine Government concerning opportunities to sell their products within the European Union. However my right hon. Friend, Minister of State for Industry and the Regions, met with Valery Khoroshivskiy, Minister for Economy and European Integration, Ukraine, on 15 September 2003, and discussed a number of issues including trade.

EU relations with Ukraine are to a large extent based on the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement, which entered into force in 1998. The agreement regulates the political, economic and cultural relations between the EU and Ukraine and is the current legal basis for the EU's bilateral trade with Ukraine.

Unfair Dismissal Compensation

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many residents of Crosby have benefited from the increase in unfair dismissal compensation to £50,000. [160543]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I regret that I am unable to provide any statistics for the Crosby area. However, in common with the rest of Great Britain, all Crosby residents have had the potential to benefit from the increase in unfair dismissal compensation in the appropriate circumstances.

Welsh Manufacturing Exports

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much revenue has been generated from exports of goods manufactured in Wales in each year since 1997. [161202]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: According to figures published by HM Customs and Excise the information is as follows:

Welsh exports of goods 1997 to 2002

	£ million
	Amount
1997	5,764
1998	5,805
1999	6,312
2000	7,172
2001	7,099
2002	6,619

Source:
HM Customs and Excise

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Behavioural Problems

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance the Government provide to children and their families seeking assistance from local authority social services departments to address children's behavioural problems in the home. [153295]

Margaret Hodge: Under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, local authorities are expected to provide a range of services that are appropriate to safeguard and provide welfare for children in need in their area.

Once a child, who is or who may be a child in need, has been referred to social services, the responsible local authority is expected to assess the child using the "Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families" (2000). Following that assessment, the local authority should then determine what services or support are needed, including those that may be provided by the local authority. For children with behavioural problems, the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) team may be identified as an appropriate way to assist the child.

Best Practice Research Scholarships

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost was of the school-based research programme on best practice; what the outputs were of this programme; and to what use they were put. [161473]

Mr. Miliband: The Department has invested £8.03 million in the Best Practice Research Scholarships programme since it began in May 2000.

The scholarships have enabled over 4,000 teachers to engage in supported, school-focused research to develop their professional knowledge, understanding and confidence, enhance their skills as practitioners and share effective practice and experience within their own schools and across the wider educational community.

Details of research undertaken so far can be found on the Teachernet website, at the following address: www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment/opportunities/bprs/search

Chesterfield High School, Sefton

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been made available to Chesterfield High School in Sefton for developing sporting facilities since 1997; how the funding has been spent; and what *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue schemes are pending. [160180]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* Upon designation as a specialist Sports College in September 2000, Chesterfield High School received a capital grant of £100,000. The school also receives recurrent annual funding based on pupil numbers to meet the costs of implementing the specialist school development plan. This is currently around £145,000 per year, of which the school is required to spend at least one third on the community element of the development plan.

The school is also receiving an award of a total of £314,328 over three years as a result of a successful School Sport partnership bid, to support the infrastructure and funding for a Partnership Development Manager. A further award to extend the Central Sefton School Sport Partnership has also been confirmed. This will mean total funding of £616,866 over three years from September 2004.

Chesterfield High School is also part of a New Opportunities Fund application by Sefton LEA. If formally approved, the funding will be used to enhance changing facilities at the school.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the schools that have used the sports facilities in the Chesterfield High School Specialist Sports College in Sefton since the school was awarded specialist status; and for what percentage of the total time available the facilities have been used by this group of schools. [160181]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* Chesterfield High School currently works with four partner secondary schools (St. Wilfrid's Catholic High School, Savio High School, Bootle High School, and Manor High School) and 20 primary schools. Sports facilities are made available to these schools as part of Chesterfield High School's specialist school community development plan and its School Sport partnership plan. The DfES does not hold data centrally about the amount of time their facilities are used by these schools.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how schools in Sefton access the facilities of Chesterfield High School; and what steps are being taken to make the facilities better known to groups that have right of access. [160182]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* Schools in Sefton access facilities at Chesterfield High School as part of the specialist school community plan, the School Sport partnership programme, and local administrative arrangements. A Community Sport Development Officer has been appointed to help with this process.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what charges are levied on schools that use the Chesterfield High School Specialist Sports College in Sefton. [160183]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* Schools are not charged for using facilities at Chesterfield High School during the school day. At evenings and weekends charging is in line with the local authority's charging policy.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what facilities and services at Chesterfield High School in Sefton are available to members of the public; what mechanisms are used to inform the public about the facilities and service available; whether facilities are available to *(a)* individual members of the public and *(b)* sporting groups; and on what basis in each case. [160184]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* Management of sports facilities at Chesterfield High School has recently transferred from the local authority to the school. At present, facilities are open to the public seven days a week under a lettings arrangement, with some exceptions during examination periods. A range of sporting groups including a number of football and badminton clubs and the Merseyside County Netball Association currently use facilities at the school, and the school runs activities during school holidays. Precise details of the future availability of facilities and the mechanisms used to inform the public will be decided locally as part of the transition, by the school, its partners, and the local authority.

Computers within Reach Programme

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* families in Crosby have benefited from the Computers within Reach programme. [160447]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Computers Within Reach scheme closed on 31 October 2001 having delivered over 24,000 recycled computers to people in 22 pilot areas, at a cost of £7.1 million over two years. Those eligible were in receipt of certain working age benefits or a state pension with minimum income guarantee.

At the same time as funding was made available for the Computers within Reach scheme, funding was also provided for the Computers for Teachers programme. For teachers who met certain criteria, this programme subsidised the cost of a computer. It was subsequently replaced by the current Laptops for Teachers scheme which dispensed with subsidies, and through which sufficient funding will be provided to enable two thirds of teachers to receive a laptop by March 2006.

Of the 24,000 computers delivered through the Computers within Reach scheme, approximately 3,000 were for people in the Liverpool area which included those in and around Crosby.

Connexions

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what amount of money has been spent on voluntary and community services by each Connexions partnership since 2001. [161031]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 12 March 2004]*: The amount spent on voluntary and community services by each Connexions Partnership is collected via management accounts which are commercially confidential. The total amount spent by Partnerships on the voluntary and community sector in each year is as follows:

	£ million
2001–02	2.6
2002–03	10.1
2003–04	[1]16.0

[1] Based on latest data to December 2003.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total budget is of Connexions Direct in 2003–04. [161034]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 12 March 2004]*: The total budget of Connexions Direct, a telephone helpline and internet service for 13–19 year olds, is £3.36 million for 2003–04.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* personal advisers and *(b)* staff are employed by Connexions Direct. [161035]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 12 March 2004]*: 40 Connexions Direct advisers (28.3 Full Time Equivalent) and seven managerial and support staff (6.75 Full Time Equivalent) are employed by Connexions Direct. Separately, three staff are employed by the contractor (Ufl) in a management role.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is his Department's policy to make local authorities act as lead bodies for the receipt of Connexions partnerships grants; and if he will make a statement. [161069]

Margaret Hodge: It is not our policy to compel Connexions partnerships to adopt any particular arrangements for the receipt of Connexions grant. However we are encouraging partnerships to improve their tax efficiency. Connexions partnerships which have a local authority acting as a lead body are more tax efficient than other structural models. Where local authorities act as the lead body for receipt of the grant they do so voluntarily and with the agreement of the Board of the Connexions Partnership.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which is the lead body for receipt of grant for the London Central Connexions Partnership. [161071]

Margaret Hodge: The Royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea is the lead body for receipt of the grant for the London Central Connexions Partnership.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the total Connexions budget in 2003–04 is spent on providing careers guidance. [161073]

Margaret Hodge: Details of the amount spent by Connexions partnerships on providing careers guidance are not collected. We provide broad guidance to partnerships about their statutory duties and it is for them to decide how best to meet the needs of their area.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total budget was of the Careers Service, prior to the establishment of the Connexions Service, in each year since 1997. [161074]

Margaret Hodge: Total annual expenditure on the Careers Service from 1998 onwards was as follows:

	£ million
1998–99	[1]198
1999–2000	228
2000–01	239
2001–02	174
2002–03	52

[1] Estimated

Data for the years prior to 1998–99 are not available. Decreasing expenditure from 2001–02 reflects the gradual introduction of the Connexions service across England.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of Connexions partnerships' VAT liability his Department will meet in 2004–05. [161076]

Margaret Hodge: Based on estimated VAT costs provided by Connexions Partnerships, we will be able to meet around 30 per cent. of these costs in 2004–05.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools *(a)* have a Connexions resource centre, *(b)* are being fitted with a Connexions resource centre and *(c)* have no Connexions resource centre in each Connexions partnership area. [161087]

Margaret Hodge: My department does not collect information on the number of Connexions resource centres in schools.

In our guidance to Partnerships we require them to use part of their grant to provide financial support for setting up and maintaining Connexions resource centres in schools. Connexions Partnerships are responsible for ensuring that this requirement is met.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidelines are provided for the staffing of Connexions resource centres in schools. [161088]

Margaret Hodge: No specific guidelines have been issued to Connexions Partnerships in relation to the staffing of Connexions resource centres in schools.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the proportion of parents who have been aware of the services offered by Connexions in each Connexions partnership area in each year since 2001. [161090]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the proportion of parents who are aware of the services offered by Connexions is not collected centrally.

Publicity campaigns and selected publications, including the recently published Parents and Carers of Year 9 Students' booklet, are raising awareness of Connexions among parents. Connexions partnerships supplement nationally produced publicity material with their own publications targeted at young people, parents and carers.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidelines are given to Connexions partnerships regarding the monitoring and supervision of personal advisers who are working towards an NVQ level 4 equivalent in a relevant professional discipline. [161092]

Margaret Hodge: All Connexions partnerships are required to have a clear, written supervision policy; a training and development policy; and appropriate processes in place to support them. In line with these policies, individual partnerships assess the level of supervision required for personal advisers depending on their level of experience, and their duties.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how long a young person has had to wait on average to speak to a Connexions personal adviser in each Connexions partnership; and what the target waiting time is for a young person to talk to a Connexions personal adviser in person. [161094]

Margaret Hodge: Information on how long a young person has to wait to see a Connexions personal adviser is not collected centrally.

Connexions Partnerships are required to publish a Youth Charter, prepared in collaboration with young people, which sets out minimum standards for accessing personal advisers, including outside normal office hours. In addition, from April 2004, Connexions Direct the telephone and web based help line, will be available nationally to all young people 18 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many under-18 conceptions there were in each of the Connexions partnership areas in each year since 2001. [161096]

Margaret Hodge: The numbers of under-18 conceptions in each Connexions partnership area for 2001 and 2002, the latest years for which this information is available, are set out in the table. It must be noted that this data predates the launch of the majority of Connexions Partnerships.

The figures for 2001 and 2002 are provisional. They are taken from National Statistics, 'Conception statistics for local authorities 1998–2002'. Data should be considered in light of increases in population between 2001 and 2002.

Partnerships	*2001*[1]	*2002*[2]
Bedfordshire and Luton	413	430
Berkshire	510	513
Birmingham and Solihull	1,198	1,176
Black Country	1,219	1,248
Bournemouth Dorset and Poole	416	382
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	469	465
Central London	1,350	1,418
Cheshire and Warrington	544	590
County Durham	398	468
Coventry and Warwickshire	702	709
Cumbria	315	323
Derbyshire	676	648
Devon and Cornwall	1,019	1,074
East London	2,091	2,093
Essex Southend and Thurrock	1,019	1,048
Gloucestershire	387	371
Greater Manchester	2,549	2,507
Greater Merseyside	1,394	1,362
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	440	485
Hertfordshire	547	565
Humber	869	864
Kent and Medway	1,218	1,180
Lancashire	1,218	1,324
Leicestershire	588	594
Lincolnshire and Rutland	494	471
Milton Keynes Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire	761	790
Norfolk	509	497
North London	889	1,019
Northamptonshire	507	552
Northumberland	215	238
Nottinghamshire	811	897
Shropshire Telford and Wrekin	358	331
Somerset	300	322
South Central	1,218	1,192
South London	851	904
South Yorkshire	1,258	1,312
Staffordshire	842	892
Suffolk	351	402
Surrey	485	466
Sussex	830	887
Tees Valley	703	720
Tyne and Wear	1,073	1,132
West London	1,020	1,070
West of England	682	610
West Yorkshire	1,886	1,901
Wiltshire and Swindon	426	401
York and North Yorkshire	421	443

[1] Conceptions for 2001 are provisional.

[2] Provisional estimates based on incomplete abortions data.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the level of awareness of the Connexions service among those young people not in education, employment or training. [161099]

Margaret Hodge: A survey of over 16,000 young people by my Department in 2003 showed that 93 per cent. of young people in need of intensive support, including those who were not in education, employment or training, were aware of the Connexions Service.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the proportion of careers guidance provided by the private sector. [161072]

Margaret Hodge: 21 out of the 47 Connexions partnerships operate a subcontracted delivery model, where private companies deliver the Connexions service, including careers advice and guidance, to young people in that Partnership area.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to reduce the running costs of the Connexions service in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [157512]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* There are no plans to reduce the grant to Connexions Partnerships in 2004–05. In addition to the grant, we had set aside funds to support Connexions Partnerships' VAT commitments on a temporary basis. In 2004–05, this will be less than had been originally planned but will still amount to some £12 million.

Education Funding

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money was spent on education in England *(a)* in total and *(b)* per pupil for each of the last five years. [160993]

Mr. Miliband: I refer the hon. Member to the Department's Departmental Report 2003, a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Crosby have benefited from the Excellence in Cities programme; and what the per pupil spending was in each year since the programme's inception. [160406]

Mr. Miliband: Chesterfield High School, Manor High School and Sacred Heart Catholic High School in Crosby have been included in Excellence in Cities since September 2001. The following table shows the number of children in Crosby benefiting, and the annual spend per pupil for the years in question.

Crosby excellence in cities programme

	Number of children	*Total EiC expenditure*	*Spend per pupil (£)*
2001–02	3,524	208,846	59.26
2002–03	3,531	453,655	128.48
2003–04	3,629	497,246	137.02

EiC funding includes Leadership Incentive Grant and Behaviour Improvement Programme money. In addition, Manor High School also receives some funding from the Statutory Education Action Zone.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been allocated to schools in Crosby for information and communications technologies since 2001. [160413]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department does not hold information on funding allocations for ICT at town level. However, Crosby is in Sefton local education authority and since 2001, including LEA match funding, schools in Sefton have received £5,167,125.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on computers for schools in Crosby in each of the last seven years. [160445]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department does not hold information on funding allocations for ICT at town level. However, Crosby is in Sefton local education authority and, including match funding, allocations for the LEA are as follows:

	Allocation to Sefton LEA (£)
1998–99[1]	587,146
1999–2000	813,934
2000–01	955,931
2001–02	1,350,818
2002–03	1,890,315
2003–04	1,925,992

[1] Specific funding for ICT in schools was not available in 1997–98.

Opportunity Bursaries

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in Crosby have benefited from New Opportunity bursaries. [160412]

Alan Johnson: Information about Opportunity Bursaries is held at the level of institutions that provide higher education provision. It is not possible to extract from that data the number of awards for students in any given area.

Education Standards

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of pupils in Crosby reached the *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* English standard in each of the last seven years. [160408]

Mr. Miliband: The results from the 2003 National Curriculum tests showed that 75 per cent. of 11 year olds in England reached Level 4 in English and 73 per cent. in mathematics. These results represent a significant improvement in standards—of 12 per cent. points in English and 11 per cent. points in mathematics—since 1997, reflecting the impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies on primary schools. We remain absolutely committed, through our new Primary Strategy, to supporting schools to achieve the ambitious targets we have set for standards of literacy and numeracy.

The following table shows the number and percentage of pupils in Crosby who have achieved level 4 or above in the Key Stage 2 English and mathematics tests since 1997. The results for Crosby are well above the national average, with improvements since 1997 in English and 1998 in mathematics in line with the improvement in the national figures:

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
English—Number of pupils[1]	703	721	779	787	789	833	823
Mathematics—Number of pupils[1]	729	677	785	746	755	826	822
English—Percentage of pupils	77	80	83	85	84	85	86
Mathematics—Percentage of pupils	80	75	84	80	80	84	86

[1] The number of eligible pupils for the Key Stage 2 tests varies slightly from year to year.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of 11 year old pupils in Crosby reached level four in *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* English in each of the last seven years. [160409]

Mr. Miliband: The percentage and number of pupils in Crosby who reached Level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 in *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* English in the last seven years are:

	Mathematics			*English*		
	Crosby[1]	*Crosby*[2]	*England*[2]	*Crosby*[1]	*Crosby*[2]	*England*[2]
2003[3]	822	86	73	823	86	75
2002	826	84	73	833	84	75
2001	755	80	71	789	84	75
2000	746	80	72	787	85	75
1999	785	84	69	779	83	71
1998	677	75	59	721	80	65
1997	729	80	62	703	77	63

[1] Number of pupils achieving level 4+.
[2] Percentage of pupils achieving level 4+.
[3] Provisional.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 15 and 16-year-olds in Crosby achieved five or more GCSEs at grade A*-C or GNVQ equivalent in each of the last seven years. [160410]

Mr. Miliband: The statistical information requested is detailed in the following table:

Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving five or more grades A-C*

Academic year	*Crosby parliamentary constituency*	*England*
1997	47.9	45.1
1998	49.5	46.3
1999	55.2	47.9
2000	57.5	49.2
2001	57.2	50.0
2002	57.0	51.6
2003	55.0	52.9

[1] Pupils are aged 15 at the start of the academic year, i.e. 31 August.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in Crosby deemed to be failing since 1997 have since reached satisfactory standards. [160407]

Mr. Miliband: No schools in Crosby have been found to be failing since 1997.

Educational Databases

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether information collected by the Connexions Service can be matched with the National Pupil Database at pupil level; and whether the two databases can be used to produce information matching the later destinations of young people with their achievements on National Curriculum Tests, secondary school they attended and other pupil characteristics. [155569]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* Information collected by the Connexions Service cannot be accurately matched with data held by the National Pupil Database.

Currently there is no national Connexions Service database as in the case of the National Pupil Database and without a commonly agreed identifier, linking records to the 47 different partnership databases would be extremely difficult.

However, as part of work to improve systems for young people and learners as well as providers, my Department is currently exploring the feasibility of establishing systems which would enable information held by different organisations to be shared and analysed more effectively. The results of the feasibility work should be available in the summer.

Homeless Young People

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other support services are available to a young person between 16 and 18-years-old who has been refused a home by his or her family but has not been made ward of court. [155642]

Margaret Hodge: The information is as follows.

Financial assistance available to 16 to 18-year-olds

Financial assistance is available to young people aged 16 or over but under 19, who are undertaking full time non-advanced education, and out of necessity have to live away from their parents or any person acting as their parents because:

They are estranged from their parents or that person(s) acting as their parents

They are in physical or moral danger: or

There is a serious risk to his physical or mental health.

They have ceased to live in accommodation provided for them by a local authority (Part III of the Children Act 1989) and are living away from their parents or persons acting as their parents

Their parent is unable to financially support them and are either chronically sick, mentally ill, detained in custody or prevented from entering or re-entering Great Britain they will be entitled to income support.

The rule is that young people must be in full time non-advanced education. If they are not and do not satisfy any other condition of entitlement, they must claim job seekers allowance if they need benefit.

Other support service provision for 16 to 17-year-olds

Local authority social service departments have a range of powers and duties under the Children Act 1989 to provide services for children in need (0 to 18-years-old) in their area.

A general duty is placed on local authorities by section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under 18 in their area who are in need by providing a range of services appropriate to meeting those needs. The definition of a child in need is set out in section 17(10) of the Act, which applies to all children, regardless of whether or not they reside with their family.

There is also a duty under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 to provide accommodation for children in need if necessary.

Special Educational Needs

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of outreach programmes carried out by moderate learning difficulty schools in mainstream secondary and primary schools; and if he will make a statement. [159382]

Margaret Hodge: The Department for Education and Skills has not conducted an assessment of special school outreach programmes which support pupils with moderate learning difficulties based in mainstream schools. Ofsted has responsibility for school inspections, including an assessment of any support that schools offer to other schools. In his annual report for 2002–03, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools noted that 'good support is provided by the special schools for pupils attending mainstream schools and colleges and this contributes significantly to the quality of the programmes. A small number of schools also provide outreach support and advice to staff in mainstream schools. However, the role of special schools in this respect is weak and developing slowly.'

The Government's new SEN Strategy—Removing Barriers to Achievement—launched in February 2004, encourages special schools to do more to share their expertise with mainstream schools in support of greater inclusion. While there is clearly scope for them to develop this aspect of their role, it is important that the quality of advice and support they offer is of a high standard. Some special schools already achieve this, but it is clear from HMCI's report that the quality overall is variable. The SEN strategy therefore includes the development of generic minimum standards for SEN support services which would extend to outreach offered by special schools. It is envisaged that these will be used for self-evaluation by local authorities and schools and in Ofsted inspections and will be a form of quality assurance for schools obtaining support from external sources.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many area special educational needs co-ordinators have been created to support non-maintained schools; [157836]

(2) what the Government's target for training for each special educational needs co-ordinator is; when this target is scheduled to be met; and what progress has been made in meeting it; [157837]

(3) what proportion of registered early years settings have special educational needs co-ordinators. [157838]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* All SENCOs based in early years settings will have benefited from three days relevant training by 2004. We are currently in the process of evaluating how local authorities are delivering the new SEN training materials. We are also asking local authorities how they are ensuring that SENCOs based in yearly years settings receive the appropriate training to be able to deliver services to meet local needs.

SENCOs are based in private, voluntary and independent sector early years settings. It is a requirement that all publicly funded early years provision has a SENCO. These SENCOs are supported by approximately 850 Area SENCOs who have been employed to support early years settings. Encouragingly the assessment of LEA/EYDCP plans for 2002/03 revealed that 90 per cent. of local authorities had Area SENCOs in place. Figures for 2003/04 will be available later this year.

Pre-school Education

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many new nurseries have been established in Crosby since 1997; [160401]

(2) how many *(a)* Sure Start centres and *(b)* early excellence centres have been created in Crosby. [160400]

Margaret Hodge: There are no Early Excellence Centres in Crosby. However, part of the catchment area for the Sure Start Seaforth and Bootle local programme is located in the church ward within the Crosby constituency. Since 1997, five new nurseries have been established in the constituency creating 189 additional places. A neighbourhood nursery attached to the Sure Start local programme is due to open in June 2004. and will deliver 65 new childcare places.

School Sports

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action his Department is taking to encourage local education authorities to work with primary care trusts to improve delivery of sports and physical activity. [159949]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Encouraging local education authorities and primary care trusts to work together to support the improved delivery of sports and physical activity opportunities is central to the work of the Government's Activity Co-ordination Team. The Department for Education and Skills is a full and active member of this group and is responsible for developing the education strand.

In developing the education strand and in taking forward new action to support local education authorities and primary care trusts, we will seek to build and maximise the impact of:

the national PE, School Sport and Club Links Strategy;

the 'Healthy Living Blueprint'—announced by the Secretary of State while speaking at the Institute of Public health last autumn. The blueprint will cover all areas of nutrition and how schools can make changes that will improve the health and lifestyle of their pupils;

the National Healthy Schools Standard (NHSS)—a joint initiative between the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health where one of the key strands of the programme is physical activity.

The Activity Co-ordination Team will publish proposals later this year.

Specialist Sports Colleges (Out-of-hours Provision)

James Purnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will publish the progress reports the Department receives from specialist sports

colleges monitoring their commitment to the provision of out-of-hours community use of their sports facilities. [160503]

Mr. Miliband: It would be disproportionately costly to provide the progress reports received from all specialist sports colleges. However, it may be useful to refer to the report template filled in by specialist schools after two years of each four year designation phase. This is available on the specialist schools website http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/specialistschools/progress/?version = 1.

The Department funds the Youth Sport Trust (YST) to work with sports colleges locally, with, for example. regular visits which include a specific focus on developing the community dimension and challenging the school about their practice. Where appropriate, the YST also works with key local stakeholders (e.g. local authority) on issues relating to community provision.

There is further information about out-of-hours access to sports college facilities in Section E of the Youth Sport Trust's 2003 National Survey of Specialist Sports Colleges, available at http://www.youthsporttrust.org/scnational/YST%20Documents/Forms/Allltems.htm.

Streaming

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of lessons inspected by Ofsted in 2002–03 in *(a)* year 7, *(b)* year 8, *(c)* year 9, *(d)* year 10 and *(e)* year 11 were set by ability in (i) grammar schools, (ii) secondary modern schools and (iii) comprehensive schools. [160778]

Mr. Miliband: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, David Bell, will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of his letter in the Library.

Student Loans

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what proportion of student loans he estimates will not be paid off after 25 years following the introduction of top-up fees; [161137]

(2) what estimate of *(a)* the proportion of the overall student loan book, *(b)* the total value of loans and *(c)* the total number of individual loans that would remain outstanding after 25 years he used in calculating the level of cost to the Government of his proposal to write off all loans after that period. [161138]

Alan Johnson: Estimates of the cost of subsidising both maintenance and fee loans in 2006/07 were set out in the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) published on 8 January alongside the Higher Education Bill.

We estimate that about 5 per cent. of borrowers, starting from 2006/07, may benefit from the proposal to write off loan balances after 25 years; the corresponding cost to the public purse is estimated at £30 million in steady state.

Copies of the Regulatory Impact Assessment were placed in the Library of the House; it is also available on the Department for Education and Skills website.

Teachers (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of teachers in Crosby have received computer training. [160444]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Statistics on teacher training in ICT are not compiled on a constituency basis, but all teachers are expected to be able to use ICT effectively in the classroom. In-service training was largely addressed by the UK-wide National Lottery-funded New Opportunities Fund (NOF) ICT training, which ran between 1999 and 2003, and to which some 96 per cent. of teachers in England signed-up.

Training in the effective use of ICT in teaching is also a mandatory part of teacher training institute courses.

Further training opportunities to address teachers' continuing professional development needs (CPD) in embedding ICT in classroom teaching are now being developed across a range of subjects, and teachers are able to buy into this training using Standards Fund monies.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teacher vacancies there were in Crosby on the latest date for which figures are available; and what steps he is taking to reduce them. [160396]

Mr. Miliband: The information is not available in the form requested. In January 2003, there were 10 vacancies for full-time teachers in maintained schools in the Sefton local education authority (LEA) area, which includes Crosby.

Like other areas, since 1997 Sefton has benefited from the initiatives that the Government have put in place to recruit and retain teachers and to increase the number of staff supporting them in schools. Since 1997, the number of full-time equivalent regular teachers in maintained schools in Sefton LEA has risen by 120, from 2,540 to 2,660 in 2003. Over the same period, the number of full-time equivalent school support staff in the LEA has grown by 540, from 780 to 1,320.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teaching assistants there were in schools in Crosby in *(a)* each of the last seven years and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available. [160397]

Mr. Miliband: In Crosby constituency there were 148 full-time equivalent teaching assistants in service in maintained schools in 2003. This is the latest information available. The table gives the corresponding numbers since 1997.

	Number of teaching assistants
1997	89
1998	92
1999	103
2000	123
2001	145
2002	131

Source:
Annual Schools' Census.

University Title

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he expects to publish the criteria for the award of university title to colleges primarily engaged in teaching. [161001]

Alan Johnson: I expect to make an announcement in the week commencing 15 March on the results of the consultation on new criteria for degree awarding powers and university title.

Voluntary Sector Funding

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding has been provided to the voluntary and community sector from the *(a)* Neighbourhood Support Fund and *(b)* New Opportunities Fund in each year since 2001. [161089]

Margaret Hodge: The Neighbourhood Support Fund has provided the voluntary and community sector with a total of £54.9 million since 2001 to deliver a programme of informal learning and self development for hard to reach young people through neighbourhood projects.

The amounts paid for each of the financial years covered by this period are as follows:

	£ million
2001–02	19.2
2002–03	21.7
2003–04	14

The new opportunities fund is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). DCMS have explained that the new opportunities fund do not collect data on whether the organisations they fund are from the voluntary and community sector, but they estimate that around 40 per cent. of the £2.4 billion they have committed has gone to this sector.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Savings Ratio

19. **Mr. Ruffley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent representations he has received on changes to the savings ratio. [160855]

Malcolm Wicks: Government continues to work with all its partners to build confidence in pension saving and make available the information that can empower individuals to take control of their retirement planning. The savings ratio is one part of the evidence base available.

However, it is a measure of current household saving (including pensioners), not a measure of saving for retirement. As such it is not an accurate predictor of long term pension savings.

Pensioner Benefits

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of pensioners in the Tamworth constituency are in receipt of *(a)* winter fuel payments and *(b)* pension credit. [160084]

Malcolm Wicks: As at winter 2002–03, the last full year for which figures are available, there were 15,225 winter fuel payments made to people aged over 60 in the Tamworth constituency. We cannot provide an estimate of the percentage of eligible people in receipt of a winter fuel payment, since payments are based on household composition and complete information on household circumstances is not available.

At 29 February 2004 there were 3,165 households (3,930 individuals) in receipt of pension credit in the Tamworth constituency. It is not possible to express these figures as percentages of pensioners, since relevant population estimates are not held at constituency level.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Pension credit recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.
3. Pension credit figures exclude a small number of clerical cases.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners are not receiving their pension credit entitlement. [160845]

Malcolm Wicks: There is no reliable estimate of the number of pensioners not currently receiving their pension credit entitlement.

We estimate that there are approximately 3.8 million pensioner households in Great Britain likely to be eligible for Pension Credit. Estimates of entitlement are known only with a significant margin of error as they are based on survey data, published after a time lag.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions today announced latest progress on take up of Pension Credit. I am pleased to report that as at 29 February, there were 2.26 million households in Great Britain, comprising approximately 2.73 million individuals, receiving Pension Credit. This number increased by 83,000 households or 110,000 individuals in the last month alone and the number continues to grow.

The hon. Member will be interested to learn that 2,653 households now receive Pension Credit in his constituency with an average award of £44.08.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on pension credit. [160853]

Malcolm Wicks: Pension Credit is making a real difference to the lives of millions of pensioners. As the progress report published today shows, there are 2.26 million pensioner households, comprising some 2.73 million individuals, now receiving Pension Credit.

Some 1.61 million households, comprising approximately 1.93 million individuals, are now receiving more money than they did under the old Minimum Income Guarantee system.

In the hon. Member's constituency some 2,661 households are now receiving Pension Credit, with an average award of £35.60.

Carers Allowance

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost to the Exchequer of abolishing the overlapping benefits rule in respect of carers' allowance for *(a)* all carers and *(b)* carers aged under 75. [155891]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 25 February 2004]:* The gross cost of abolishing the overlapping benefits rule for carers allowance is estimated at about £330 million a year, or £195 million after allowing for reduced payments in the income-related benefits[1]. Abolishing the rule only for those aged under 75 would be about £270 million or £160 million after offsetting adjustments. These figures do not take account of the behavioural effect of carers presently not claiming carers allowance who would be induced to do so by a change in the rules.

[1] Estimates use benefit rates for 2003–04 and are based on a 100 per cent. extract of carers allowance claims on the carer's allowance computer system for May 2003, a 5 per cent. extract from the claims on the income support computer system in 2003 and a 1 per cent. extract of the housing benefit/council tax benefit claims of May 2002.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects to finalise plans for existing payments under the Child Support Agency to be transferred to the new system of calculating payments. [160110]

Mr. Pond: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Dartford (Howard Stoate) on 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 341W.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will answer question reference 151019, tabled by the hon. Member for Northavon on 21 January. [161625]

Mr. Pond: An answer was given on 12 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1796W.

Departmental Website

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how often his Department updates the section on its website containing details of local Jobcentre Plus and Pension Service offices. [156826]

Mr. Browne: Information about Job Centre Plus and the Pension Service local offices is updated at least once a month.

Employment Development Fund

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of the Employment Development Fund was for each year from 1997–98 to 2005–06 (planned); what its purpose is; and if he will make a statement. [156703]

Mr. Browne: The Employment Development Fund (EDF) was created in autumn 2001 to provide funds for the continued development of our Welfare to Work agenda, which has been successful in helping to reduce unemployment to its lowest level since 1975.

EDF funds were primarily allocated to part-fund the national roll out of Jobcentre Plus, which delivers an enhanced work-focused service to all working age people. Remaining EDF funds were allocated to fund wider Welfare to Work policies.

The EDF provided funds of £86 million in 2001–02; £577 million in 2002–03 and £564 million in 2003–04. The use of funds available from the EDF have now been agreed and the fund no longer exists.

Health and Safety

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to increase penalties for breaches of health and safety legislation. [155940]

Mr. Browne: The Government are committed to raising maximum penalties for health and safety breaches, as parliamentary time allows. We welcome the Health and Safety at Work (Offences) Bill, introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Edmonton (Mr. Love), which introduces the changes the Government are seeking to make.

Maintenance (Non-Resident Parents)

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for what reason working tax credit payments are taken into account in assessment of maintenance payments in respect of non-resident parents; and if he will make a statement. [160841]

Mr. Pond: The amount a non-resident parent pays to support his child should reflect his income whether or not that income includes working tax credit.

In the new scheme working tax credit is taken into account as income for the non-resident parent's maintenance calculation. This carries forward the arrangements in the old scheme which also treated family credit (and then tax credits) as income.

Pension Protection Fund

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his Statement on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 763, if he will place in the Library a copy of the actuarial simulations that have been produced for the projected finances of the pension protection fund on a range of different assumptions. [161622]

Malcolm Wicks: The original cost of £340 million to £375 million is the difference between the assets and the liabilities of the schemes taken over by the PPF in a year. We used the following assumptions to arrive at that cost:

(i) Data on the MFR funding levels of just over 1,000 schemes that had an MFR valuation with an effective date between April 1997 and April 2000 were used. Adjustments were made for each scheme in the sample in order to estimate the up-to-date funding position. The results were scaled up to the total for all private sector occupational pension schemes.

(ii) The value of the liabilities if such schemes were to fall within the responsibility of the pensions protection fund were estimated on a basis equivalent to midway between the current MFR basis and the full insurance buyout costs for the liabilities.

(iii) The cost will obviously depend on the number of firms going insolvent. Allowance was made for the possibility of normal, poor and extreme years as far as bankruptcies are concerned, but on average over a 20-year period, the probabilities of a scheme becoming a liability of the PPF were assumed to be between about 0.3 per cent. a year for large schemes and 1 per cent. a year for small schemes. This assumed level of bankruptcy is cautious, especially given that it is very rare for large companies to go bankrupt.

(iv) Allowance was made for the impact of the suggested salary cap using data on the earnings of occupational schemes members from the Family Resources Survey.

These costs were recently recalculated at £300 million using the same methodology, but updated to take account of current market conditions and the decisions taken on the precise nature of the PPF compensation payable.

Remploy

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how his Department is working to help Remploy provide more opportunities for learning and employment to disabled people. [159426]

Maria Eagle: The Government agree Remploy's annual business plan, and set the targets for the employment and development of disabled people through the company's Workstep programme. Remploy are supported by the Government through investment of grant-in-aid each year; in 2003–04, this was set at £115 million.

Remploy supports around 9,000 people on the Workstep programme nationally. During 2002–03, 1,610 disabled people progressed into unsupported employment with their help. At a local level, Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisers work closely with Remploy to ensure disabled people are referred appropriately for support from the company. In addition, Remploy recruit to the Workstep programme directly.

Remploy is separately contracted to deliver other Jobcentre Plus programmes, including New Deal for Disabled People, Work Preparation and Work Based Learning for Adults. These contracts are paid for and organised separately from the grant-in-aid given to Remploy for delivery of the Workstep programme.

In 2003–04, Remploy's target is that each employee should spend 5 per cent. of their time on learning and development activities; they are currently on course to exceed this. In addition, Remploy is currently developing a network of learning centres, to provide all their employees with access to learning opportunities.

Small Business Support

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the support programmes for small businesses that *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies have financed in each of the last five years; how much money was allocated for each scheme in each year; how much money has gone unclaimed under each scheme; and how many small businesses have benefited from each scheme. [161257]

Maria Eagle: As a result of the cross-cutting review of Government services for small business, Jobcentre Plus' employer strategy is developing services to make them more responsive to the diverse characteristics and recruitment needs of smaller businesses.

Jobcentre Plus is undertaking an ongoing programme of research to understand the characteristics and needs of small businesses; developing a proactive and co-ordinated approach towards raising awareness of some of the services offered through the local office network; introducing Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) specialists in each region to support local office delivery; and continuing to build on strategic partnerships with the National Employment Panel SME Board, Business Link, Learning and Skills Councils and others at local level to deliver more coherent services to small businesses.

However this Department does not have any financial support programmes for small businesses. This is an area for the Department of Trade and Industry.

Pensions Uprating (European Union Residents)

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the Department's policy is on up-rating pensions for British pensioners living in *(a)* EU countries and *(b)* EU accession countries. [160752]

Mr. Pond: Uprating of State Pension is currently paid to pensioners in the European Economic Area and Switzerland under the provisions of the European Community's social security legislation (Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71). These provisions will apply equally to accession countries.

TREASURY

Birth Defects

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many birth defects there were in each of the last five years in England. [160624]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Iris Robinson, dated 15 March 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking for the number of birth defects in each of the last five years in England. (160624)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for maintaining the National Congenital Anomaly System (NCAS) notifications in England and Wales. These notifications are collected only for live and stillbirths (e.g. terminations are excluded) and are provided by NHS Trusts on a voluntary basis either directly to ONS or via local congenital anomaly registers that exchange data with ONS.

In 1997 there were no registers exchanging information with NCAS. By 2001, NCAS received more complete information from four local congenital anomaly registers through multi-source

ascertainment. As a result, numbers of notifications in England and Wales have increased since 1997. These registers cover all births in Wales and 24 per cent. of births in England. For the remaining areas NCAS relies solely on SD56 notification forms and is likely to be less complete. Up to eight malformations can be recorded on the system for each baby.

Estimates of the figures requested, covering the latest five year period are shown in the attached table.

Estimated numbers of malformations recorded, 1997–2001, England

	Estimated number of malformations notified
1997	6,753
1998	6,516
1999	8,575
2000	9,273
2001	8,027

Source:
Estimates based on numbers of babies notified to National Congenital Anomaly System at 31 July 2002 (Health Statistics Quarterly no. 16 Annual update: Congenital anomaly statistics—notifications 2001) and the number of malformations recorded for each notified case.

Charities

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how he will monitor compliance with the 2006 full cost recovery commitment for the charitable sector. [158028]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

"The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector: a cross cutting review" recommends that all Government Departments will implement the principle of full cost recovery by April 2006.

This recommendation is being taken forward through two main strands of work:

Guidance to government departments, as reflected in the HM Treasury 'Guidance to Funders' and forthcoming procurement guidance from the Office for Government Commerce and the Home Office Active Community Unit. This will be reinforced by a revised Compact Code of Good Practice on Funding.

Guidance to voluntary and community organisations on identifying costs. This guidance is being taken forward by the Association of Chief Executives in Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO) with the aid of a grant from the ACU and advice from a range of government department as well from the National Audit Office.

However, it not intended to introduce a new layer of bureaucracy by monitoring all contracting and grant agreements with the voluntary and community sector. Instead, the Active Community Unit will work with departments to help review existing practice and make changes whenever the opportunity arises. The Active Community Unit will remain in dialogue with the sector booth through a longitudinal study of voluntary and community organisations through the State of the Sector Panel and through general dialogue with the sector.

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate Her Majesty's Treasury has made of the number of charities that will be affected by the changes to Gift Aid announced in the pre-Budget report; and what cross-departmental steps can be taken to assist charities adversely affected by the changes. [156814]

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on changes he proposes to the Gift Aid scheme. [157313]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Leominster (Mr. Wiggin) on 15 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 865–66W. The Government have consulted closely with charities on this issue.

Child Tax Credit

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what correspondence his Department has sent to families relating to the transfer of the child elements of Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support to Child Tax Credit payments; and if he will place copies in the Library. [159703]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue has not entered into general correspondence with families about the transfer from child allowances in Income Support and income-based Jobseekers Allowance to Child Tax Credit. I understand however that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has written to all IS/JSA(IB) families to notify them of the change. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

Economic Statistics

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families in Buckingham have received Child Tax Credit. [161318]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Chorley (Mr. Hoyle) on 25 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 407W.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many senior citizens in Buckingham qualified for the 10 pence rate of income tax in each year since its introduction. [161324]

Dawn Primarolo: All income taxpayers benefit from the 10 pence starting rate. The Survey of Personal Incomes estimates there are about 6,000 state retirement pension age taxpayers in the Buckingham constituency in 2000–01. Figures for 1999–2000 are currently not available.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the *(a)* change and *(b)* percentage change in full-time permanent jobs in Buckingham was from 1 May 1997 to 31 December 2003; [161325]

(2) how many new jobs have been created in Buckingham since 1997. [161326]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. John Bercow, dated 15 March 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions about full time jobs, and jobs created in Buckingham. (161325, 161326)

The attached table shows the information requested for 1997 and 2002, which is the latest year available.

No information is available about numbers of new jobs created during this period.

Number of full-time and part-time employees[1] in Buckingham Parliamentary Constituency: 1997 and 2002

	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Total*
Number of employees			
1997	15,600	7,600	23,200
2002	16,000	7,700	23,800
Change from 1997 to 2002			
Absolute	400	100	600
Percentage	2.8	2.3	2.6

[1] Employee jobs only, not self-employed jobs.

Source:

1997: Annual Employment Survey, rescaled 2002; Annual Business Inquiry (ABI).

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of unemployment was in Buckingham in each year since 1997. [161327]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. John Bercow, dated 15 March 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment in Buckingham.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) following International Labour Organisation definitions. However, the LFS sample size is too small to give reliable estimates of unemployment in the Buckingham Parliamentary Constituency.

ONS does also compile statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (ISA) for local areas including parliamentary constituencies.

The table below gives the annual average number of ISA claimants for the Buckingham Parliamentary Constituency for each year since 1997.

Average annual number of JSA claimants in the Buckingham parliamentary constituency

	Average number of claimants
1997	677
1998	508
1999	473
2000	382
2001	377
2002	416
2003	429

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many businesses in Buckingham have benefited from the 100 per cent. tax exemption for the purchase of computer and internet equipment. [161328]

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many businesses in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Chorley have benefited from the 100 per cent. tax exemption for the purchase of computer and internet equipment. [161446]

Dawn Primarolo: We regret that the information is not available to estimate the number of businesses in the areas mentioned which have benefited from the 100 per cent. first year capital allowances for the purchase of information and communication equipment.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many senior citizens in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley qualified for the 10 per cent. rate of income tax in each year since its introduction. [161448]

Dawn Primarolo: All income taxpayers benefit from the 10 pence starting rate. The Survey of Personal Incomes estimates there are about *(a)* 90,000 state retirement pension age taxpayers in Lancashire and *(b)* 8,000 state retirement pension age taxpayers in the Chorley constituency in 2000–01. Figures for 1999–2000 are currently not available.

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many families in Burton constituency are in receipt of child tax credit; [161835]

(2) how many households in Burton constituency are receiving *(a)* working tax credit and *(b)* the child care element of the working tax credit. [161836]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of in-work families receiving the child tax credit, and of the number receiving child or working tax credit, in each constituency appear in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. Geographical analyses. January 2004." This can be found on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty. No reliable estimates are available of the number receiving the childcare element of working tax credit due to the small number of sample cases.

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many senior citizens in *(a)* Burton constituency and *(b)* Staffordshire qualified for the 10 per cent. rate of income tax in each year since its introduction. [161838]

Dawn Primarolo: All income tax payers benefit from the 10 pence starting rate. The Survey of Personal Incomes estimates there are about *(a)* 9,000 state retirement pension age taxpayers in the Burton constituency and *(b)* 70,000 state retirement pension age taxpayers in Staffordshire in 2000–01. Figures for 1999–2000 are currently not available.

Family Gifts (Taxation)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what steps he is taking to protect elderly people from tax liabilities arising from gifts made to their children for property purchases; [160501]

(2) what plans he has to levy income tax on gifts between family members. [160502]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government made clear in the pre-Budget report that it intends to combat the use of trust structures and other vehicles used for tax avoidance purposes. It has also made clear that it will not tax legitimate transactions between family members. The details of these proposals have been

subject to consultation, and further announcements on how these objectives will be secured will be made in the Budget.

Employment (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the *(a)* change and *(b)* percentage change was in full-time permanent jobs in Crosby from 1997 to 31 December 2003; [160532]

(2) how many new jobs have been created in Crosby since 1997. [160533]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mrs. Curtis-Thomas, dated 15 March 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions about full time jobs, and jobs created in Crosby. I am replying in his absence. (160532, 160533)

The attached table shows the information requested for 1997 and 2002, which is the latest year available.

No information is available about numbers of new jobs created during this period.

Number of full-time and Part-time employees[1] in Crosby parliamentary constituency: 1997 and 2002

Number, per cent.

	Full-Time	*Part-Time*	*Total*
Number of employees			
1997	10,500	6,200	16,700
2002	10,800	6,700	17,500
Change from 1997 to 2002			
Absolute	300	500	800
Percentage	3.3	7.3	4.8

[1] Employee jobs only, not self-employed jobs.

Source:

1997; Annual Employment Survey, rescaled 2002; Annual Business Inquiry (ABI).

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were employed in tourism-related jobs in Crosby on the latest date for which figures are available. [160565]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mrs. Curtis-Thomas, dated 15 March 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about tourism-related jobs in Crosby. I am replying in his absence. (160565)

The latest available data, from the 2002 Annual Business Inquiry, shows that the total number of people employed in tourism related jobs in Crosby was 1,600. This total is obtained by combining estimates of those working in the following industries, as identified by the Standard Industrial Classification 2003:

hotels

restaurants

bars

activities of travel agencies

libraries, archives, museums etc.

sporting activities

other recreational activities.

EU Budget

Mr. Spring: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list *(a)* EU member states' gross contributions to the EU budget, *(b)* EU member states' net contributions to the EU budget and *(c)* the United Kingdom's abatement, for the last two financial years. [161463]

Ruth Kelly: Based on the most recent information published by the European Commission the gross and net contributions of member states for the years 2001 and 2002 are set out in the following tables.

Gross contributions, after taking account of the UK abatement

€ million

EU15	*2001*	*2002*
Belgium	3,532	3,018
Denmark	1,778	1,688
Germany	19,727	17,582
Greece	1,350	1,338
Spain	6,592	6,551
France	14,471	14,152
Ireland	1,211	1,019
Italy	11,613	11,280
Luxembourg	257	184
Netherlands	5,517	4,467
Austria	2,091	1,809
Portugal	1,266	1,187
Finland	1,233	1,185
Sweden	2,338	2,086
United Kingdom	7,743	10,153

Net contributions[1]

€ million

EU15	*2001*	*2002*
Belgium	-518	-1,475
Denmark	429	216
Germany	9,380	5,897
Greece	-4,391	-3,357
Spain	-7,057	-8,666
France	2,720	1,929
Ireland	-1,108	-1,581
Italy	2,920	3,039
Luxembourg	-644	-791
Netherlands	3,830	2,876
Austria	688	255
Portugal	-1,681	-2,686
Finland	213	-18
Sweden	1,245	841
United Kingdom	1,805	3,985

[1] Minus sign denotes net recipient.

The figures for the UK Abatement, which are included within the figures in the tables, are:

	€ million
	United Kingdom
2001	7,343
2002	4,934

The UK abatement for the financial years 2001–02 and 2002–03 was:

	£ million
2001–02	4,427
2002–03	3,234

Mr. Spring: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value of the EU rebate to the UK has been since its agreement in 1984. [161461]

Ruth Kelly: By the end of financial year 2002–03 the UK abatement has been worth around £37 billion since its introduction.

Customs and Excise

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many detector dogs are engaged in detecting illegal imports of *(a)* meat and *(b)* other animal products. [161407]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) on 3 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 60W. The six dogs trained to detect meat and other products of animal origin are now deployed in operational use.

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Customs and Excise staff are employed to tackle illegal imports of meat; and if he will make a statement. [160631]

John Healey: Customs has over 3,000 front-line detection staff, all of whom have responsibility for detecting illegal imports, including meat and other products of animal origin, as part of their normal duties. In addition, the £4 million funding for 2003–04 provides for four new specialist detection teams and allows the detector dog complement to be increased from two to six.

These staff are also supported by others who work on intelligence, analysis, publicity and overall policy development.

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many prosecutions for illegal import of meat have taken place in each of the last 10 years. [160632]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) on 3 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 58–61W. Customs brought no prosecutions between 1994 and 2000.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what national standards apply to time limits for the handling by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise of recoverable debt cases; and what the performance of debt management units in meeting these standards was in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03; [160863]

(2) how many staff were employed in Her Majesty's Customs and Excise debt management units in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03; and how many new staff were recruited to the units in each of those financial years; [160864]

(3) what the cost was of the specialist asset recovery teams set up to pursue the recovery of assets from directors involved in fraudulent companies in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03; how many staff were deployed in these teams in each of those financial years; and what assets were realised by these teams in each case; [160865]

(4) how much missing trader fraud debt owed to Her Majesty's Customs and Excise was outstanding at the end of 2002–03; [160867]

(5) what the value of new debt owed to Her Majesty's Customs and Excise notified to the debt management units in 2002–03 was; and how much of that new debt was represented by VAT missing trader fraud; [160868]

(6) how much debt was owed to Her Majesty's Customs and Excise on 31 March 2003 *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by type of debt; what percentage that total formed of the total amount of taxes and duties collected by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in 2002–03; and what the change in the number of unresolved debts since 31 March 2002 was. [160869]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 20 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 1328–29W.

Iraq

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what contributions were made after 2 December 1992 by overseas Governments in respect of costs incurred by the UK during the Gulf War. [158652]

Mr. Boateng *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* None are recorded.

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many *(a)* solely state-financed and *(b)* public-private partnership and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible have been launched in each region in each of the last 10 years; [160973]

(2) how much was spent by *(a)* the Government on solely state-financed projects and *(b)* the (i) Government and (ii) private sector on public-private and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible in each of the last 10 years, broken down by region. [160974]

Mr. Boateng: Information on signed private finance initiative projects is submitted to the Treasury by Departments. A spreadsheet of these data, which were

last submitted in July 2003, is available from the HM Treasury website at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public_private_partnerships/pop_pfi_stats.cfm. The spreadsheet can be searched by sponsoring Department, capital value and region.

Information on individual conventionally procured capital projects is not held centrally and is a matter for individual Departments.

The Treasury itself has not launched any conventionally procured capital projects in the last 10 years.

Business Regulation

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 5 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1209W, on the EU regulatory burden, whether he has received a copy of the CBI's top 10 regulatory threats; and how many of these regulations derive from the EU. [161514]

Dawn Primarolo: The Treasury is aware that the CBI has published a list of 10 "regulatory threats". These include six European regulations, one issue of UK application of EU law, two cases of UK policy, and one issue relating to United States legislation.

Small Business

Brian Cotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the support programmes for small businesses that *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies have directly financed, including lower rate tax reliefs, in each of the last five years; how much money was allocated for each scheme in each year; how much money has gone unclaimed under each scheme; and how many small businesses have benefited from each scheme. [161256]

John Healey: The cross-cutting review of Government services for small business was published by the Government in December 2002, and outlines the services provided to small businesses from Departments and agencies across Government. A copy is available in the Library of the House.

Further details of Government expenditure allocated by the Treasury, incorporating expenditure upon small business support, are set out within departmental estimates, which are also available in the Library of the House. Details of the tax treatment of small business are set out annually in the Chancellor's Budget statement.

Sugar Tax

Diana Organ: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce a sugar tax on soft drinks; and if he will make a statement on the use of new taxes to promote healthy eating. [160905]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government keeps all aspects of the tax system under review. There are no current plans to introduce a 'sugar tax'.

As the Wanless Review "Securing Good Health for the Whole Population" discusses, there are difficulties of principle and practice with using tax instruments to promote public health. In particular, unlike with smoking where any consumption can have damaging effects, the consumption in moderation of most foodstuffs can be to the benefit rather than the detriment of an individual's health.

Suicides

Charles Hendry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many suicides of people under 30-years-old there have been in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* age and *(b)* sex. [161083]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Charles Hendry, dated 15 March 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning how many suicides of people under 30 years old there have been in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* age and *(b)* sex. (161083)

The most recent available figures on suicide mortality are for the calendar year 2002. Figures for each year are given in the table below for the calendar years 1997 to 2002.

Number of deaths from suicide[1] and injury undetermined whether accidentally or purposely inflicted[2], among people aged under 30 by (a) age and (b) sex: England and Wales, 1997 to 2002[3]

	Males				Females			
	13–19	*20–24*	*25–29*	*Total*	*13–19*	*20–24*	*25–29*	*Total*
1997	139	371	454	964	41	70	106	217
1998	149	315	501	965	42	84	101	227
1999	128	311	435	874	44	70	105	219
2000	140	265	405	810	47	68	96	211
2001	129	257	323	709	32	64	83	179
2002	116	236	327	679	41	59	97	197

[1] The cause of death for intentional self harm was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E950-E959for the years 1997 to 2000, and, for the years 2001 and 2002, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes X60-X84.

[2] The cause of death for injury undetermined whether accidentally or purposely inflicted was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E980-E989 excluding E988.8 for the years 1997 to 2000, and, for the years 2001 and 2002, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes Y10-Y34 excluding Y33.9 where the Coroner's verdict was pending. It is assumed likely that most of these deaths at ages over 13 are cases where the harm is self-inflicted but there was insufficient evidence to prove that the deceased deliberately intended to kill themselves. As there were no intentional self harm deaths in children under the age of 13, data for undetermined whether accidentally or purposely inflicted have not been included.

[3] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year from 1997 to 2002.

Tax Credits

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he estimates the cost would be for each of the next seven years of *(a)* increasing child and Working Tax Credits in line with (i) prices and (ii) earnings, *(b)* increasing the family element of the Child Tax Credit in line with prices and other elements and the thresholds in line with earnings and *(c)* increasing the family element of the Child Tax Credit in line with prices, the thresholds in line with prices, and the other elements in line with earnings. [160792]

Dawn Primarolo: A reliable estimate could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Unemployment (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of unemployment was in each year since 1997 in Crosby. [160531]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Curtis-Thomas dated 15 March 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment in Crosby. (160531)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) following International Labour Organisation definitions. However, the LFS sample size is too small to give reliable estimates of unemployment in the Crosby Parliamentary Constituency.

ONS does also compile statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (ISA) for local areas including parliamentary constituencies.

The table below gives the annual average number of JSA claimants for the Crosby Parliamentary Constituency for each year since 1997.

Average annual number of JSA claimants in the Crosby parliamentary constituency, 1997–2003

	Average number of claimants
1997	2,151
1998	1,804
1999	1,645
2000	1,452
2001	1,243
2002	1,155
2003	1,142

VAT

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Customs and Excise's strategy to tackle VAT missing trader fraud; how many staff were deployed to tackle this type of fraud in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03; what the cost of deploying staff to tackle this type of fraud was in each case; and what additional costs were attached to the strategy in (i) 2001–02 and (ii) 2002–03. [160866]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 20 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 1330W.

Details of Customs' strategy and progress in tackling VAT missing trader fraud are contained in their Annual Report and Accounts 2002–03 published in December 2003 (HC 52).

Information on the number of staff deployed to tackle VAT missing trader fraud in 2001–02 is contained in Tackling Indirect Tax Fraud (November 2001) and for 2002–03 in Measuring and Tackling Indirect Tax Losses (December 2003). Copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Customs does not maintain information about costs in the format requested and it could be produced only at disproportionate cost to produce.

Diana Organ: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether there are regional targets for collection of VAT on *(a)* new educational buildings and *(b)* new annexes to educational buildings; [160906]

(2) if he will make a statement on the collection of VAT on *(a)* new educational buildings and *(b)* extensions and annexes to existing buildings used for education purposes, in the further education sector. [160907]

John Healey: In accordance with the European Union Directives which govern the UK VAT rules, new buildings and annexes to existing buildings constructed by charities for non-business use can be zero-rated in certain circumstances. Educational establishments which meet the tests for zero-rating can benefit from this relief. Extensions, on the other hand, are always standard-rated, except those that qualify as approved alterations to protected buildings.

There are no regional targets for the collection of VAT on new educational buildings or new annexes to educational buildings. Customs and Excise aims to collect the correct amount of VAT at the right time across the whole country, regardless of the region.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer under what circumstances local authorities are unable to recover VAT incurred by activities and transactions relating to the delivery of services. [161070]

John Healey: Local authorities are able to recover the VAT incurred in connection with their statutory activities and in connection with much of their trading. The legal basis for this is in section 33 of the VAT Act 1994.

Under sub-section 33(2), they cannot recover VAT incurred in connection with business activities which are exempt from VAT, unless the amount is insignificant. An amount would be insignificant if it were less than 5 per cent. of the total VAT incurred by an authority in a year.

Under sub-section 33(6) local authorities cannot recover any VAT that would be irrecoverable by all other VAT registered persons.

Welsh Industries

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money was spent in each of the last five years on assistance to industries in Wales. [160922]

Mr. Boateng: Devolved funding decisions are a matter for the Welsh Assembly Government.

Windfall Profits (Banks)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to tax the windfall profits of the main clearing banks. [161042]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 12 March 2004]:* Tax policy is reviewed as part of the annual Budget process. There are no current plans to introduce a windfall tax on banks.

HEALTH

Alcohol Advertising

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1061W, on alcohol advertising, what judgement the Chief Medical Officer has formed on the studies. [159153]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Chief Medical Officer has read and considered evidence in the interim analytical report produced by Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and awaits the publication of the Government's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England. The strategy is due to be published shortly in accordance with the timetable set out in the NHS Plan.

The public health white paper, "Choosing Health?", was launched at the beginning of March, with a consultation on improving people's health to run for 12 weeks. This offers the opportunity to have a wide-ranging national debate about improving the health of the whole population, including issues associated with alcohol misuse. We will ensure that the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England feeds into this consultation.

Allergies

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent medical breakthroughs he has assessed in the *(a)* identification and *(b)* treatment of allergies. [159935]

Dr. Ladyman: We are not aware of any specific recent medical breakthroughs.

Amantadine

Mr. Hurst: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the *(a)* use and *(b)* effectiveness of amantadine in the treatment of multiple sclerosis in the national health service. [161125]

Dr. Ladyman: Products containing amantadine are not currently licensed for the treatment of multiple sclerosis (MS) in the United Kingdom. In order to determine whether amantadine is safe and effective in the treating multiple sclerosis, the product would need to be assessed by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and the new indication approved by the Committee on Safety of Medicines. To date, no such application has been made.

A Cochrane Review to determine the effectiveness and safety of amantadine in reducing fatigue in people with multiple sclerosis was published in *The Cochrane Library, Issue 1, 2004*. The reviewers concluded that the efficacy of amantadine treatment in reducing fatigue in people with MS is poorly documented and that there is insufficient evidence to make recommendations to guide prescribing.

Continence Services

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment has been made of the facilities available in schools to manage children who have *(a)* bladder and *(b)* bowel conditions; [159837]

(2) what assessment he has made of the cost-effectiveness of dedicated specialist paediatric continence services; [159838]

(3) what assessment has been made of the services available to children with continence problems since February 2000; [159839]

(4) how many paediatric specialist continence nurses are practising; and what plans he has to increase their number. [159841]

Dr. Ladyman: The effects of bladder and bowel conditions and other causes of continence problems in children can be of serious concern in schools. All schools in England were made aware of the Department's "Good Practice in Continence Services" guidance (2000), which addresses measures for effective management. I understand the Department for Education and Skills requires schools to have toilet and medical facilities in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999. It is for local assessment of need, on a case by case basis, to determine what additional facilities may be needed in schools. Individual provision in schools is not assessed centrally.

"Good Practice in Continence Services" indicates cost-effectiveness associated with specialist continence services and advises that each national health service primary care trust (PCT) should have specialist continence services in place which provide an individual assessment of needs. PCTs are also encouraged to use the Modernisation Agency's publication, "Good practice in paediatric continence services—benchmarking in action", when ensuring levels of quality and provision.

PCTs are responsible for assessing and providing continence services in accordance with need, and for determining the number of nurses necessary for this activity. An assessment of services and the number of paediatric specialist continence nurses practising, is not undertaken centrally.

NHS Dentists

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists are accepting new NHS patients; and if he will make a statement. [157830]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on dental practices which are accepting new National Health Service patients can be found on the www.nhs.uk website.

Under current arrangements, dentists are able to vary their NHS commitment and so the number of practices accepting patients is subject to change in the light of such decisions by dentists to vary their NHS commitment.

On the basis of the most recent information, out of the total number of 8,587 practices in England, on 2 March there were:

4,022 practices accepting children;

2,817 practices accepting charge paying adults;

3,164 practices accepting charge exempt adults;

1,545 practices that carry out occasional NHS treatment to non-registered patients.

Overall, 93 per cent. of callers to NHS Direct are being directed to dentists within locally agreed distance standards who are accepting NHS patients.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the population was registered with an NHS dentist in each primary care trust in each year since PCTs were established. [156648]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information available is for general dental service (GDS) dentist registration rates for adults and children in England at 30 September 2002 and 2003. The registration rates for each primary care trust area has been placed in the Library.

Registrations lapse if patients do not return to their dentists within 15 months. Registration rates therefore exclude patients who have not been to their GDS dentist within the past 15 months. They also exclude patients who receive dental treatment from other National Health Service dental services such as personal dental services (PDS) and community dental services (CDS) as patients do not need to be registered to access these services.

Registrations are included in the area of the dentist. The registration rates for some areas may be affected by some patients receiving their dental treatment in a different area from the one in which they live.

Patients wishing to see a GDS dentist can obtain details of dentists accepting patients in their area by contacting NHS Direct. 93 per cent. of callers to NHS Direct in the first 10 months of 2003 were given details of dentists accepting new NHS patients within local distance standards.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of *(a)* adults and *(b)* children in the West Chelmsford parliamentary constituency were registered with an NHS dentist in 1997; and how many were registered with an NHS dentist at the most recent date for which figures are available. [160274]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* The information available is for general dental service (GDS) dentist registration rates for adults and children in North Essex health authority at 30 September 1997 and at 30 September 2002 and for Chelmsford Primary Care Trust for 30 September 2002 and 30 September 2003, and is shown in the table.

Registration will lapse if a patient does not return to their dentist within 15 months. Registration rates represent the proportion of the population who have attended a dentist under GDS arrangements in the previous 15 months. The registration period was changed for new registrations and registration renewals from September 1996. Previously the period for adults was 24 months and for children registration lapsed at the end of the following calendar year. The change caused registration numbers to fall between November 1997 and August 1998.

Registrations are included in the area of the dentist. The registration rates for some areas may be affected by some patients receiving their dental treatment in a different area from the one in which they live.

National health service dental services are also provided by the community dental service, personal dental service, salaried service of the GDS and hospital dental service. These services do not require the patient to be registered with a dentist before treatment.

National health service: Number of registered patients as a proportion of the population September each year

	30 September 1997		*30 September 2002*		*30 September 2003*	
Health Authority/Primary Care Trust	*Child*	*Adult*	*Child*	*Adult*	*Child*	*Adult*
North Essex Health authority	0.66	0.51	0.64	0.46	—	—
Chelmsford PCT			0.64	0.50	0.64	0.51

Breast Feeding

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the National Service Framework for Children will include a national breast feeding strategy. [161346]

Dr. Ladyman: The national service framework for children, young people and maternity services will set out standards for a wide range of health and social care services and the interface with education.

Rather than address specific conditions or issues, the standards are likely to set out what support should be available to children, young people and pregnant women in managing a range of conditions and issues.

Cosmetic Surgery

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to monitor the competence of doctors practising cosmetic surgery; and if he will make a statement. [156720]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer my hon. Friend to the response given by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health to the hon. Member for South Suffolk (Mr. Yeo) on Monday 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 699W.

Epilepsy

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to the NHS of drugs associated with the treatment of epilepsy was in each of the last five years. [161040]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 12 March 2004]:* The table shows the number of prescription items and cost of anti-epilepsy drugs dispensed in the community in England over five years from 1998 to 2002.

Number of prescription items (millions) and net ingredient cost (£ million) of all Antiepilepsy drugs (British National Formulary, section 4.8) that were dispensed in the community in England, 1998 to 2002

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Number of items (million)	6.12	6.40	6.70	7.20	7.60
Net ingredient cost (million)	74.86	86.47	99.11	120.45	142.22

Notes:
1. Epilepsy drugs are included in British National Formulary (BNF) section 4.8 (Antiepileptics)
2. The data is based on prescription items dispensed in the community in England, i.e. by community pharmacists and appliance contractors, dispensing doctors, and prescriptions submitted by prescribing doctors for items personally administered in England.
3. The data do not cover drugs dispensed in hospital or private prescriptions.
4. The net ingredient cost refers to the cost of the drug before discounts and does not include any dispensing costs or fees. It does not include any adjustment for income obtained where a prescription charge is paid at the time the prescription is dispensed or where the patient has purchased a pre-payment certificate.
Source:
Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) data from the Prescription Pricing Authority

EU Enlargement

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of the free movement of *(a)* doctors, *(b)* nurses and *(c)* dentists from the EU accession countries on the national health service after 1 May. [159201]

Mr. Hutton: Under the Accession Treaty of 16 April 2003, the new States must ensure that the qualifications they award to doctors, general nurses, midwives and dentists, in respect of training begun on or after 1 May 2004, meet specific minimum requirements.

The qualifications they award in respect of training begun before then and which do not meet those requirements are also eligible for recognition but subject to certification from their national authorities of recent and substantial practice experience—normally three out of the five years preceding the date of certification. These "acquired rights" provisions are on the lines adopted on previous accessions.

Decisions about whether to offer employment to doctors, nurses and dentists from European Union accession countries are matters for local national health service bodies, taking into account the need to ensure the highest possible standards of public safety.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 3 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1022W, on EU accession states, what safeguards will be put in place to ensure that patients are not put at risk if there are accession states that are not compliant with EU minimum requirements on medical training by 1 May. [161220]

Mr. Hutton: It is for the European Commission, which is closely monitoring the progress of Acceding States; to see that their obligations are met, The EC intends to update member states shortly. It is open to the regulatory bodies to require confirmation that applicants' qualifications meet minimum training standards or, if not, that they have had recent and substantial practice experience.

General Practitioners (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners there are per head of population in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough. [158438]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 3 March 2004]:* Information on number of general practitioners per head of population is not collected by London borough. Information by primary care trust within the five London strategic health authority areas is shown in the table.

All practitioners[1] per 100,000 of weighted population[2] for London by PCT as at 31 March 2003

	Population	All practitioners[1]	All practitioners per 1,000 population	All practitioners per 100,000 population
England	48,962,969	32,865	0.7	67.1
of which:				
London	6,984,254	4,855	0.7	69.5
of which:				
Q04 North West London				
5AT Hillingdon PCT	218,529	153	0.7	70.0
5H1 Hammersmith and Fulham PCT	156,901	104	0.7	66.3
5HX Ealing PCT	302,552	207	0.7	68.4
5HY Hounslow PCT	208,598	126	0.6	60.4
5K5 Brent PCT	265,704	202	0.8	76.0
5K6 Harrow PCT	179,698	137	0.8	76.2
5LA Kensington and Chelsea PCT	162,850	127	0.8	78.0
5LC Westminster PCT	180,388	147	0.8	81.5
Q05 North Central London				
5A9 Barnet PCT	293,766	227	0.8	77.3
5C1 Enfield PCT	245,320	148	0.6	60.3
5C9 Haringey PCT	225,029	169	0.8	75.1
5K7 Camden PCT	196,993	154	0.8	78.2
5K8 Islington PCT	179,449	130	0.7	72.4

All practitioners[1] per 100,000 of weighted population[2] for London by PCT as at 31 March 2003

	Population	All practitioners[1]	All practitioners per 1,000 population	All practitioners per 100,000 population
Q06 North East London				
5A4 Havering PCT	226,567	137	0.6	60.5
5C2 Barking and Dagenham PCT	168,575	74	0.4	43.9
5C3 City and Hackney PCT	232,010	180	0.8	77.6
5C4 Tower Hamlets PCT	203,175	156	0.8	76.8
5C5 Newham PCT	256,047	171	0.7	66.8
5C6 Walthamstow, Leyton and Leytonstone PCT	161,469	100	0.6	61.9
5C7 Chingford, Wanstead and Woodford PCT	114,526	89	0.8	77.7
5C8 Redbridge PCT	158,619	92	0.6	58.0
Q07 South East London				
5A7 Bromley PCT	281,817	196	0.7	69.5
5A8 Greenwich PCT	223,187	138	0.6	61.8
5AX Bexley PCT	196,863	114	0.6	57.9
5LD Lambeth PCT	274,572	201	0.7	73.2
5LE Southwark PCT	239,874	156	0.7	65.0
5LF Lewisham PCT	249,051	162	0.7	65.0
Q08 South West London				
5A5 Kingston PCT	146,674	108	0.7	73.6
5K9 Croydon PCT	304,201	210	0.7	69.0
5LG Wandsworth PCT	242,365	192	0.8	79.2
5M6 Richmond and Twickenham PCT	157,611	128	0.8	81.2
5M7Sutton and Merton PCT	331,277	220	0.7	66.4

[1] Salaried Doctors (Para. 52 SFA), PMS Other and GP Retainers.
[2] Population derived from GP registered lists normalised to national totals as recorded in ONS population census.
Sources:
Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.
Department of Health Calculation of GMSNCL weighted populations

Child Protection

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to improve liaison between health and social services, with special reference to measures arising from the death of Victoria Climbié. [159840]

Dr. Ladyman: The children's national service framework will set out a vision for services that are integrated around the needs of the child and will emphasise the importance of joint working across the fields of education, health and social services.

I also refer the hon. Member to the publication, by my hon. Friend the Minister for Children, on Tuesday 4 March of "Every Child Matters: Next Steps" and the Children Bill. These include a range of measures, which will transform relationships between frontline professionals, including doctors, nurses, teachers and social workers.

Intermediate Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans his Department has to extend the provision of intermediate care services; and if he will make a statement. [159779]

Dr. Ladyman: We have exceeded the provision of 1,700 additional intermediate care places. We will be continuing the current programme to deliver the 5,000 additional intermediate care beds and this is likely to be achieved during 2004.

Nursing Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health with reference to the increase in nursing care funding announced by his Department on 27 February, what he estimates the average cost per resident will be of free nursing care for older people. [158517]

Dr. Ladyman: The average cost for the just over 128,000 care home residents who receive National Health Service Funded Nursing Care is estimated at £87 per week from 1 April 2004.

Information Technology

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list each information technology project being undertaken by his Department and its agencies including the *(a)* start date, *(b)* planned completion date, *(c)* current expected completion date, *(d)* planned cost and *(e)* current estimated cost; and if he will make a statement. [154680]

Mr. Hutton: Information technology projects costing £100,000 or more currently underway within the Department of Health and its agencies are shown in the table.

Project name	Start	Planned end date	Current expected end date	Planned cost (£000)	Current estimated cost (£000)
Children Looked After 6[1]	September 2002	May 2004	May 2004	383	344
DH Finance System	April 2002	May 2004	May 2004	6,010	5,330
DH Internet Content Management System/Service	November 2002	October 2003	February 2004	3,000	3,450
DH Personnel System-Improvements and upgrade	March 2003	March 2004	March 2004	425	376
e-Learning Induction Portal	August 2002	November 2003	Mach 2004	119	131
Enterprise Portal	September 2003	November 2005	November 2005	3,600	3,600
Improving records management for material outside the scope of MEDS	April 2003	April 2005	April 2005	970	970
MHRA Information Mgmt Strategy (Sentinel)	January 2003	April 2005	April 2005	12,300	12,300
Management of Electronic Documents System (MEDS BM2)	January 2000	December 2003	March 2004	1,758	1,850
Mental Health Minimum Data Set—Central Requirements Project	June 2001	August 2004	August 2004	1,120	1,225
Modernising Information—Conformance to e-govt targets and standards	January 2003	March 2004	June 2004	482	406
National Programme for IT (NPfIT)—National Data Spine	December 2003	December 2010	December 2010	620,000	620,000
NPfIT_National e-booking service	December 2003	December 2005	December 2005	64,500	64,500
NPfIT—Eastern local service provider (LSP)	December 2003	December 2010	December 2010	934,000	934,000
NPfIT—London LSP	December 2003	December 2010	December 2010	996,000	996,000
NPfIT—North East LSP	December 2003	December 2010	December 2010	1,099,000	1,099,000
NPfIT—North West and West Midlands LSP	December 2003	December 2010	December 2010	973,000	973,000
NPfIT—Southern LSP	December 2003	December 2010	December 2010	986,000	986,000
OIS Transformation Implementation Project	October 2002	March 2004	May 2004	11,578	11,824
PASA Contract Information Mgmt Sys phases 1 and 2	March 2003	January 2005	January 2005	229	229
PASA Electronic Record Mgmt Sys	January 2003	March 2005	March 2005	467	467
Patient Experience Information Project	January 2003	August 2004	August 2004	191	185
Policy and Delivery System	December 2001	October 2004	March 2004	777	758
Reference Costs 2003	November 2002	December 2003	February 2004	340	358
Research and Development Management System	August 2002	May 2004	July 2004	319	286
STEIS Maintenance Project	July 2003	March 2004	April 2004	183	180
Widening the range of material stored in MEDS	April 2003	June 2004	July 2004	605	605

[1] This project is part of an area of work being transferred to DEFS

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many meetings the Director-General of NHS IT has had with *(a)* Mr. Bill Gates and *(b)* Microsoft executives in the last year. [156893]

Mr. Hutton: Bill Gates routinely visits England every two years to maintain contact and meet with a range of key private and public sector bodies, including Government Departments.

Bill Gates visited London on 26 January 2004 and amongst a full day of meetings and engagements, he met with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and myself and several senior Departmental and National Health Service officials, including Richard Granger, the Director General of NHS IT.

Richard Granger also met Steve Ballmer, Microsoft chief operating officer, on 23 February 2004.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, prior to placing an order for a bespoke software office suite, the NHS will publish the details and results of the tendering process. [156896]

Mr. Hutton: The Official Journal of the European Community notice on the national programme for information technology (NPfIT) in the National Health Service was published at the beginning of February 2003. This has led to a range of applications and software that will now be provided by the local service providers and contractors recently appointed by the NPfIT.

There are also existing suppliers of software to the NHS covered by framework agreements and licensing arrangements. Developments and renegotiations for the framework agreements may be required over time.

People with Learning Disabilities

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people with learning disabilities have access to health services. [160076]

Dr. Ladyman: People with learning disabilities have the same right of access to medical treatment as everyone else. The NHS Plan emphasised the Government's commitment to a person-centred health service that challenges discrimination on all grounds.

"Valuing People—A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century", includes an important chapter on improving health for people with learning disabilities. In July 2002, the Department issued good practice guidance on health action plans and health facilitation, two key elements of the "Valuing People" strategy for improving the health of people with learning disabilities. A health action plan is a personal plan detailing the actions needed to maintain and improve the health of an individual and any help needed to achieve this. The plan will usually be co-produced with them. Health facilitation involves casework to help people with learning disabilities access mainstream services. It also involves helping mainstream national health service services to respond to the needs of people with learning disabilities.

The "Valuing People" support team produced "All Means All" in 2003. This explains how "Improvement Expansion and Reform", the Department's planning and performance framework, relates to people with learning disabilities. "All Means All" discusses access to health care and identifies that primary care staff, for

example, can ensure that all people with a learning disability are identified and known to all members of primary care teams.

"Discharge from Hospital: Pathway, Process and Practice", published by the health and social care joint unit and change agents team in January 2003 contains good practice guidance and guidelines for the acute sector when caring for someone with a learning disability. It talks about health action plans and emphasises the importance of liaison with the health or social care professional supporting the individual when making preparations for discharge from hospital.

We have undertaken to look into the possibility of annual health checks for people with learning disabilities during 2004 in our response to the recent choice consultation exercise, "Building on the Best—Choice, Responsiveness and Equity in the NHS", which was published on 9 December 2003.

NHS Trusts

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the possible impact of recent changes to rules on revenue and capital for Queen Mary's Hospital NHS Trust and Oxleas NHS Trust; and if he will make a statement; [154923]

(2) when he intends to reply to the letter of 17 November 2003 from the hon. Member for Erith and Thamesmead concerning Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup and Oxleas NHS Trust; [154925]

(3) what assessment he has made of the *(a)* revenue consequences for Oxleas NHS Trust of accounting changes affecting capital charges on PFI assets, and *(b)* possible impact on patient care; [154926]

(4) if he will agree to the meeting with hon. Members representing Bexley and Greenwich constituencies and representatives of Queen Mary's NHS Trust, Oxleas NHS Trust and Bexley Care Trust requested by the hon. Member for Erith and Thamesmead in his letter of 6 October 2003. [154927]

Mr. Hutton: I have responded to the concerns raised about Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup and Oxleas national health service trust in my letter to the hon. Member of 28 February.

Hormone Replacement Therapy

Mr. Roy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had concerning the dangers of oestrogen to women. [160256]

Dr. Ladyman: When the findings from the recently terminated oestrogen-only hormone replacement therapy (HRT) arm of the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) trial are published, they will be carefully considered by the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) and its expert working group on HRT. When its review is complete, any necessary action, including updating the current product information will be taken and women and doctors will be clearly informed of the advice. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has copied in the Scottish Executive in all their communications. Further briefing can be found on the MHRA website at www.mhra.gov.uk.

Organ Donation

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if his Department will introduce a monitoring system to assess whether *(a)* intensive care and *(b)* accident and emergency staff routinely (i) check the Organ Donor Register whenever a new patient is admitted and (ii) approach patients and relatives about organ donation; [159599]

(2) how many organs he estimates were missed, in intensive care units and accident and emergency wards, which could have been used for transplantation in the last three years; [159600]

(3) what measures his Department is taking to introduce training so that intensive care and accident and emergency staff *(a)* routinely check the Organ Donor Register whenever a new patient is admitted and *(b)* approach patients and relatives about organ donations. [159601]

Ms Rosie Winterton: An audit of potential donors has been undertaken by UK Transplant since April 2003. It captures information about every death in every intensive care unit in the United Kingdom and records whether the organ donor register was contacted to check the wishes of the deceased.

A recent analysis of the audit data carried out by UK Transplant shows that 250 out of 545, suitable for donation became donors, 25 were contraindicated for medical reasons, 206 relatives refused and for 64 families there was no record of any discussion about donation. In total there were 270 suitable donors who for different reasons did not donate. For physiological reasons not all donors can donate all organs.

UK Transplant will employ an education and training manager to follow up the best practice guidance issued in 2003. A national health service education programme will provide expert education advice on the training needs associated with organ donation and transplantation and produce an education strategy, including the development of an education pack for pre and post graduate use, to deliver raised awareness and knowledge among all relevant NHS staff.

Orthopaedic Surgery (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in Greater London have been waiting for *(a)* less than six months, *(b)* six to 12 months, *(c)* one to two years, *(d)* two to three years and *(e)* more than three years for an (i) in-patient admission and (ii) initial out-patient assessment in orthopaedic surgery. [158437]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 3 March 2004]:* Figures are collected by specialty. Orthopaedic surgery is included in the speciality Trauma and Orthopaedics. As at December 2003, for Trauma and Orthopaedics in the primary care trusts (PCTs) within the five London strategic health authorities (SHAs), there were:

22,086 patients who had been waiting less then six months for inpatient admission.

6,536 patients who had been waiting between six and 12 months for inpatient admission.

No patients were waiting more than 12 months for inpatient admission.

Figures for outpatients are not collected by monthly waiting time. As at December 2003, for Trauma and Orthopaedics in the PCTs within the five London SHAs there were:

3,094 patients who had been waiting between 13 and 17 weeks after a general practitioner referral.

969 patients who had been waiting between 17 and 21 weeks after a GP referral.

Three patients who had been waiting between 21 and 26 weeks after a GP referral.

No patients were waiting longer than 26 weeks after a GP referral.

Osteoporosis

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of NHS progress with respect to *(a)* prevention of osteoporosis and *(b)* treatment of women who are (i) at high risk of osteoporotic fracture and (ii) have sustained a fragility fracture. [158868]

Dr. Ladyman: The prevention, treatment, care and support of those at risk of osteoporosis are important components in the delivery of the integrated falls services that the national service framework for older people requires to be in place locally by April 2005. The Department will be monitoring formally the 2005 milestone as this is included as one of the key targets in "Improvement, Expansion and Reform", the priorities and planning framework for 2003–2006. All strategic health authorities (SHAs) except one currently report that the April 2005 target will be achieved in their area. The Department has offered support to the SHA that may have difficulty meeting the target across the whole of its area.

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what he assesses will be the effect of National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance proposed in the osteoporosis appraisal consultation document on standard six of the National Service Framework for Older People. [158869]

Dr. Ladyman: Standard six of the national service framework for older people sets out clear milestones for the National Health Service, working in partnership with councils, to take action to prevent falls and reduce resultant fractures or other injuries in their populations of older people.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence's technology appraisal will give doctors the latest evidence-based information on the most effective treatments for osteoporosis. This will ensure that patients have access to dear, authoritative advice on the sort of treatment that might be best for them.

Waiting Lists/Times

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average length of time a patient was on the waiting list for treatment for *(a)* cancer and *(b)* heart disease in each London strategic health authority in each year since 1992; [159271]

(2) how many *(a)* cancer and *(b)* heart disease patients resident in each London strategic health authority were on a waiting list for treatment in each year since 1992. [159272]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* The five London strategic health authorities (SHAs) were established in April 2002. Figures are available only from this date.

The tables show the average waiting times and the number of patients waiting for treatment for heart disease in London SHAs.

Average waiting list times

Months

SHA	*March 2003*	*December 2003*
North Central London	2.3	1.7
North East London	2.9	3.0
North West London	2.8	2.2
South East London	2.2	1.9
South West London	2.1	2.1

Number of patients on waiting list

Months

SHA	*March 2003*	*December 2003*
North Central London	82	118
North East London	731	760
North West London	939	790
South East London	626	521
South West London	353	355

Information on the average waiting times and number of patients waiting for cancer treatment in London SHAs is not available centrally. The NHS Cancer Plan sets out our strategy to reduce waiting times for cancer patients. The ultimate goal is that no one should wait longer that one month from an urgent referral for suspected cancer to the beginning of treatment except for a good clinical reason or through patient choice; it is planned to achieve this by 2008.

There is a series of staged milestones towards this goal: from 2001 new targets of a maximum one month wait from diagnosis to treatment for breast cancer and a maximum one month wait from urgent general practitioner referral to treatment for acute leukaemia, children's cancer and testicular cancer were introduced. From 2002, the target of a maximum wait of two months from urgent referral to treatment for breast cancer was introduced. By 2005, there will be targets of a maximum one month wait from diagnosis to treatment and a maximum two month wait from urgent GP referral to treatment for all cancers. Data on current targets are published quarterly on the Department's website for SHAs and trusts, at: http://www.performance.doh.gov.uk/cancerwaits.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were waiting for in-patient hospital treatment in the mid-Essex Hospital Trust area for each of the last two months. [159424]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 10 March 2004]:* The information requested is shown in the table. This is the latest data that is available.

	Month	Number waiting for in-patient hospital treatment
Mid-Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust	December 2003	8,093
Mid-Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust	January 2004	7,895

Figures for February 2004 will be available on 2 April.

Working Time Directive

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of the European working time directive on the number of hours a trainee surgeon will complete between senior house officer grade and obtaining a consultant post; and if he will make a statement. [160659]

Mr. Hutton: The minimum length of time for each higher specialist training programme is governed by the European Specialist Medical Qualifications Order 1995. These minima are expressed in terms of years rather than hours. The shortest minimum is three years and the longest five. Training in the United Kingdom complies with them in all cases and exceeds them significantly in many instances.

We have in place 20 European working time directive pilot projects, four hospital at night pilots, as well as a significant development programme linked to reform of postgraduate medical training. A vital element of this on-going work is to assess the inter-relationship between implementation of the directive and current proposals to reform medical training to ensure that it is better managed, structured and able to respond to the needs of patients and the service.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Sentencing

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the reasons for changes in average sentence lengths since 1991. [158736]

Paul Goggins: The average length of sentence passed in a magistrates' court increased from 2.9 months in 1991 to 3.1 months in 2002, the last year for which information is available.

The average length of sentence passed in the Crown Court increased from 18.3 months in 1991 to 25.9 months in 2002.

While it is for the courts to determine the sentence passed in individual cases the Government believes that prison should be reserved for serious, dangerous and seriously persistent offenders.

It is the role of the recently appointed Sentencing Guidelines Council to publish robust and comprehensive sentencing guidelines to assist the courts in their task of ensuring consistent and just disposals in all cases.

Asylum and Immigration

Mr. Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the vacancy rate in accommodation contracted for by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) was on the latest date for which figures are available, distinguishing between direct contracts and contracts placed with agencies such as local authorities, broken down by local authority area where NASS has such contracts. [157043]

Beverley Hughes: The information is not available in the format requested. With the reduction in the number of asylum applicants, work is underway to reduce the number of unoccupied places and further information will be provided about that in due course.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what monitoring of returned unsuccessful asylum applicants is undertaken by UK representatives in *(a)* Congo, *(b)* Ivory Coast and *(c)* Cameroon; and if he will make a statement on his assessment of the safety of those individuals. [153940]

Beverley Hughes: All asylum (and human rights) claims are considered on their individual merits in accordance with our obligations under the 1951 United Nations' Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Should a Claim be refused and any appeal before the independent Immigration Appellate Authority be unsuccessful, it means that for that individual it is safe to return.

In making decisions about removing failed asylum seekers, the Home Office takes full account of up to date information from a wide range of sources about the situation in the country of origin. These sources include intergovernmental organisations (such as the UN), governmental sources (including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and human rights organisations (for example Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch).

If an individual asylum seeker establishes a need for international protection they would not be returned.

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the estimated annual cost to Manchester City Council is of the implementation of the provisions within the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Bill as they affect local authorities. [159423]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* Measures in the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Bill are designed to reduce abuse of the United Kingdom asylum system. We would therefore expect implementation of its provisions to reduce costs for central and local government in the long-term. Concerns have been raised over the potential impact of clause 8 of the Bill which proposes to withdraw support from failed asylum-seeking families if they refuse to co-operate with efforts to return them home. If, by putting themselves in this position, parents put their children at risk, it would be for the local authority to decide how the interests of their children should be protected under existing child protection legislation. The Bill does not change the grounds on which children may be taken into care. We do not believe that many, if any, parents would put their children in this position. We have made clear

that local authorities would be reimbursed for costs incurred if a child did require assistance from a local authority as a consequence of the withdrawal of support.

Bail (Offences)

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he is taking to prevent offences being committed by individuals released on bail. [156340]

Paul Goggins: The Government are determined to ensure that the courts give proper and careful consideration before exercising their discretion to grant bail where defendants who are already on bail commit an offence. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 provides that a defendant who applies for bail in respect of an offence that appears to have been committed while he was on bail for another offence may not be granted bail unless the court is satisfied that there is no significant risk of his offending again.

Coroners

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether coroners have powers to prevent burials taking place in private land. [159969]

Paul Goggins: Coroners do not have specific powers that allow them to prevent burials taking place in private land.

Correspondence

David Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the hon. Member for Walsall, North's letter of 3 February regarding a constituent, Home Office ref. PO1274/4. [159634]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* I wrote to my hon. Friend on 10 March 2004.

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 26 January from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mrs. Abdo. [159985]

Mr. Blunkett: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 9 March 2004.

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 26 January from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. A. Mboob. [159986]

Mr. Blunkett: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 4 March 2004.

Prosecutions (Romford/Havering)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful criminal prosecutions were brought for crimes perpetrated in the Romford area of the London borough of Havering during *(a)* 1995, *(b)* 1997, *(c)* 1999, *(d)* 2001 and *(e)* 2003; [157010]

(2) how many criminal charges were pressed for crimes perpetrated in the Romford area of the London borough of Havering during *(a)* 1995, *(b)* 1997, *(c)* 1999, *(d)* 2001 and *(e)* 2003. [157011]

Paul Goggins: The available information is contained in the table and relates to *(a)* defendants convicted and *(b)* defendants not convicted in the Havering Petty Sessional Area, the magistrates court within which sits at Romford, in 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001 and 2002.

Statistics of defendants charged with offences are not collected centrally.

Defendants convicted and those not convicted of offences of all types in the Havering Petty Sessional Area

	Defendants convicted	*Defendants not convicted*[1]
1995	4,101	1,243
1997	3,711	965
1999	3,695	933
2001	3,112	970
2002	4,973	1,239

[1] Includes defendants whose proceedings were discontinued, those discharged under Sec 6 MCA 1980, and those whose charges were withdrawn or dismissed.

Statistics for 2003 will available in the autumn.

Deaths in Custody

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the people in custody who have committed suicide since 1 January including their name, date of birth, date of death, prison in which they died, the reason for imprisonment, date of sentencing and length of sentence they were serving. [161183]

Paul Goggins: As publishing such details can cause distress to the families of those bereaved by a self-inflicted death in prison, I will write to the hon. Member with this information in full.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many suicides in custody have been referred to the Prison Ombudsman in 2004 for investigation. [161184]

Paul Goggins: Since 1 January 2004, one apparently self-inflicted death has been referred to the Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) for investigation. From 1 April 2004 the PPO will investigate all deaths of prisoners and probation hostel residents and any deaths of those held in immigration detention accommodation.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many deaths in custody have occurred in the last 10 years as a result of a heart attack to which harsh treatment has been found to be a contributory factor. [158863]

Paul Goggins: With one possible exception in police custody in 1999 (in respect of which two inquests have failed to establish the exact cause of death), no heart-related death during the last 10 years in Police, Immigration or Prison Service custody has been related to "harsh treatment".

Detention and Removal Centres

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements are in place for medical examinations of immigration and asylum detainees who allege assault by members of staff of detention and removal centres, escorts, or other detainees. [157449]

Beverley Hughes: There is medical provision at all immigration removal centres. Initial medical examinations of immigration detainees who allege assault would be carried out by the centre's own medical staff. Detainees, or their representatives, can request access to independent medical advice should they so wish. In such circumstances the centres would provide facilities for these examinations.

Ms. Drown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Group 4 received a copy of the report completed by Steven Shaw on Yarl's Wood. [159900]

Beverley Hughes: I can confirm that Group 4 have been provided with a copy of Stephen Shaw's report concerning allegations of racism at Yarl's Wood as covered in the *Daily Mirror* article of 8 December 2003.

The investigation by Stephen Shaw into the fire at Yarl's Wood on 14/15 February 2002 is still ongoing.

Ms. Drown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many detainees and ex-detainees were interviewed by Steven Shaw for each of his reports; and how many detainees in total were present on the day of the fire. [159901]

Beverley Hughes: With regard to Stephen Shaw's inquiry into allegations of racism at Yarl's Wood, I understand that 30 detainees were interviewed by members of the inquiry team. The Ombudsman also received written notes from some detainees regarding this matter.

The inquiry into the fire at the centre on 14/15 February 2002 is ongoing. I understand that Mr. Shaw's team has so far spoken directly to some detainees, received signed statements from others, and has reviewed all the statements taken by police during their investigation of the incident, which includes a large number provided by detainees.

On the day of the fire there were 385 detainees in Yarl's Wood.

Disorder Penalty Notices

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the penalty notice for disorder pilot. [160062]

Ms Blears: Home Office Research Findings summarising the findings of the interim evaluation report of the pilots of penalty notices for disorder scheme, which ran in four police force areas between August 2002 and September 2003, was published today. I have today issued a written statement welcoming the positive findings and placed copies of the findings in the Library.

DNA Testing

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the DNA testing of *(a)* prisoners and *(b)* mentally disordered offenders conducted between February and September 2003 was on a (i) voluntary and (ii) compulsory basis; and if he will make a statement. [160204]

Paul Goggins: The DNA Prisoner Sampling Exercise between February and September 2003 aimed to take a DNA sample from all convicted offenders held in Prison or Mental Health Establishments, who did not have a DNA profile on the National DNA Database. Persons held in mental hospitals who had been found unfit to plead or acquitted of an offence on grounds of insanity were also included, if their DNA was not already held on the Database.

Sections 63(3B) and (9A) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (as amended) provide that a police officer may take a non-intimate body sample from a person who is convicted of a recordable offence on or after 10 April 1995. If the prisoner was convicted prior to 10 April 1995, there is no power to take a non-intimate sample unless he is a person to whom Section 1 of the Criminal Evidence (Amendment) Act 1997 applies. Section 63(3C) of the 1984 Act also provides that a non-intimate sample may be taken from persons who were detained on the order of the court, following their acquittal on the grounds of insanity or a finding of unfitness to plead.

Sections 63(3B) and (3C) of the 1984 Act provide the power to take a DNA sample whether a prisoner or patient volunteers to give one or not. If a prisoner or patient refuses to give a sample voluntarily, then the police can take one using reasonable force if necessary. Of the 3,772 prisoners and patients sampled, 87 prisoners initially refused to be sampled. 77 of these prisoners subsequently agreed and only 10 had a head hair sample taken non-voluntarily. Patients were only sampled if their doctor gave consent and the patient agreed to provide a DNA sample.

Drug Rehabilitation Schemes (Portsmouth)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been in drug rehabilitation schemes in the area covered by the Portsmouth Drug Action Team, in each year since 2001–02. [144499]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[pursuant to her reply, 18 December 2003, Official Report, c. 1056W]:* I have been asked to reply.

I regret that my previous response was incorrect, and the first paragraph should have read as follows.

Information on people in drug treatment services at drug action team level is collected centrally from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS). However, data broken down by drug action team areas for 2001–02 and 2002–03 have not yet been finalised and published.

Drug Treatment and Testing Orders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to extend drug treatment and testing orders. [159804]

Caroline Flint: Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) have been available to courts in England and Wales since October 2000. The commencement target has been increased from 6,000 orders per year between 2001–03 to 9,000 orders in 2003–04. This will increase again to 13,000 orders, including 1,000 of the new lower intensity variant, in 2004–05 and 16,000 orders, including 4,000 of a lower intensity, in 2005–06.

The DTTO will be replaced by the drug rehabilitation requirement of the new Community Order, when the relevant provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 are implemented.

Eastern European Arrivals

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Eastern Europeans have been granted *(a)* leave to enter the United Kingdom and *(b)* leave to remain in the United Kingdom pursuant to European Community Association agreements in each of the last 12 months. [161617]

Beverley Hughes: This information is not available in the format requested. However, I would refer the hon. Member to the Written Ministerial Statement I made on 12 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 112WS.

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what ministerial instructions have been issued to his departmental staff on changes to requirements on Eastern Europeans seeking to enter the United Kingdom pursuant to European Community Association agreements. [161618]

Beverley Hughes: I would refer the hon. Member to the Written Ministerial Statement I made on 12 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 112WS.

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the type of businesses in respect of which permission was granted in relation to Eastern Europeans for *(a)* leave to remain in the United Kingdom and *(b)* leave to enter the United Kingdom in the last 12 months pursuant to European Community Association agreements, broken down by number of each type of business. [161621]

Beverley Hughes: This information is not routinely collected. However, I would refer the hon. Member to the Written Ministerial Statement I made on 12 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 112WS.

Electronic Tagging

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the case for using electronic tagging for sex offenders; and if he will make a statement. [157347]

Paul Goggins: Electronic tagging is already used with some sex offenders to monitor compliance with a curfew requirement, as part of an intensive supervision package. It does not, however, monitor their location as they move from one place to another. We are now actively considering the use of satellite tracking technology, which does monitor location, with a range of offender categories. Subject to the outcome of equipment testing, we hope to start a number of pilot schemes shortly.

Court Escort Contractors

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many miles were driven by prison and court escort contractors in 2003. [160555]

Paul Goggins: Vehicles operated by the court escort contractors and Prison Service vehicles covered a combined total of approximately 22,700,000 miles in 2003. This figure covers the movement of prisoners from police stations and prisons to courts; from courts to prisons; and the transfer of prisoners between prisons.

EU Enlargement (Worker Registration)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the procedure will be for a citizen coming from one of the accession countries to work in the UK on 1 May; and when and how he or she would register with the workers' registration scheme. [157349]

Beverley Hughes: Nationals of the new accession countries will need to apply to register with the Home Office as soon as they find and start a job. Applications will be made by post and they will be accepted from 1 May 2004 onwards. Those applying will need to provide information about what job they are doing, for whom, at what wage and where in the country it is.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when and how citizens of EU accession countries currently resident in the UK should register on the workers' registration scheme. [157350]

Beverley Hughes: The workers registration scheme will be effective from 1 May 2004. Nationals of A-8 countries who are already working legally in the UK will not be required to register with the scheme.

Extraditions (Russia)

Mr. Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1715W, on Extraditions (Russia), if he will name the four Russian citizens or ex-citizens who were the subject of an extradition request by the Russian Federation authorities; and whether a decision has been made on the case outstanding as at 12 February. [160247]

Caroline Flint: It is not the policy or practice to list the names of those who are or who have been the subject of extradition proceedings. A decision will be taken as soon as possible in the one Russian extradition request which is currently outstanding.

Female Prisoners

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of self-harm were recorded for female prisoners for the last three years for which complete data is available. [158061]

Paul Goggins: The figures requested are provided in the following table.

	Number of incidents of self-harm recorded for women prisoners
2001	2,034
2002	2,493
2003	[1]7,408

[1] In December 2002 new procedures for reporting self-injury were introduced in prisons in England and Wales, and much of the increase in reported self-harm in 2003 may result from this rather than reflect an actual increase in incidence of self-harm.

The prison population, and particularly the women's estate, contains a substantial number of individuals who have experienced negative life events, all of which are identified as significant risk factors for suicide and self-harm. These include psychiatric disorders, alcohol and drug dependency, family background and relationship problems, as well as histories of self-harm and previous abuse.

The Prison Service recognises that self-harm is a particular problem among women prisoners, and is currently developing a range of interventions including: individual crisis counselling for women prisoners who self-harm; the continued development and evaluation of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, which is currently being trialled at Durham, Bullwood Hall and Holloway prisons; investment and planning to ensure progress on the detoxification strategy in the Women's Estate; the development of a new, three-stage screening process to more effectively detect mental health problems; and the introduction of a new training pack for all staff working with women in custody, which includes a module on the health and well being of women prisoners.

One million pounds from the Department of Health has been allocated to the Women's Estate to be spent on the recruitment of psychiatric nurses, and 11 out of the 17 prisons for women now have mental health in-reach facilities. A network of establishments (both male and female) has been set up to develop interventions, facilitate evaluation and share good practice on the subject of self-harm, and guidance to staff on managing people who self-harm has been circulated to all establishments.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to consult stakeholders on proposed changes in the remit of National Holocaust Memorial Day. [160641]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 11 March 2004]*: There are no plans to change the remit of Holocaust Memorial Day. Had the Home Office plans to change the remit of the Day, stakeholders would be consulted via the existing advisory group structures.

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Holocaust Memorial Day local activities guidelines packs were sent out in 2004; and how many local authorities commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day. [160642]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 11 March 2004]*: 7,500 local activities guidelines packs, of the version produced specifically for Holocaust Memorial Day 2004, have been distributed in hard copy. The pack was available online at the official Holocaust Memorial Day website and has been downloaded 8,740 times.

2,083 copies of guidance prepared in conjunction with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland were distributed in hard copy or downloaded.

We are aware of 146 events organised or part-organised by 99 different local authorities for Holocaust Memorial Day 2004, with a further 194 organised by other groups or individuals outside central or local Government. This total of 340 compares to 244 for Holocaust Memorial Day 2003.

However, both this year and last the number of local events is likely to have exceeded this number as feedback and monitoring are not comprehensive. These figures also exclude the range of events around Northern Ireland making up the national commemoration, and much activity in schools.

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the remit for Holocaust Memorial Day is. [160644]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 11 March 2004]*: The key aims of Holocaust Memorial Day are to remember all victims of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution, to raise awareness and understanding of the Holocaust and to promote the continuing importance of its messages (that it should never be forgotten or repeated) by considering those affected by more recent atrocities that raise similar issues. It is also to educate about the dangers of anti-Semitism, racism and all forms of discrimination.

The 13-point Statement of Purpose, which expands on these aims, can be obtained in full from the Home Office or from the Holocaust Memorial Day website at www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk.

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to meet the National Association of British Arabs concerning Holocaust Memorial Day; and if he will make a statement. [160645]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 11 March 2004]*: I met with representatives of the National Association of British Arabs and the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding on 8 March. The meeting was to discuss issues of domestic concern to British Arabs. Holocaust Memorial Day was not discussed.

The National Association of British Arabs have not requested a meeting with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to discuss Holocaust Memorial Day and no such meeting is arranged.

The Home Office would encourage all communities to participate in Holocaust Memorial Day, which raises issues that are relevant to all.

Home Detention Curfew Scheme

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders placed on the home detention curfew scheme between January 1999 and 31 January 2004 *(a)* have been (i) cautioned and (ii) convicted and *(b)* are awaiting prosecution, broken down by (A) sex and (B) police authority. [159277]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* Between the commencement of the home detention curfew scheme in January 1999 and 31 January 2004, 87,250 offenders were placed on the scheme. During that period, the Home Office has been notified of a total of 1,126 offenders who have been either cautioned, convicted or who are awaiting prosecution for an offence committed whilst they were subject to the Home Detention Curfew scheme. Our records do not provide a breakdown of how many of these cases resulted in a caution or conviction or are still awaiting trial. To provide such information would incur a disproportionate cost.

Of those offenders, 115 were female and 1,011 were male. The table gives the number of offenders for each police authority.. The table gives the number of offenders for each police authority.

	Number
Avon and Somerset	19
Bedfordshire	7
Cambridgeshire	8
Cheshire	18
City of London	1
Cleveland	20
Cumbria	6
Derbyshire	34
Devon and Cornwall	15
Dorset	11
Durham	11
Dyfed Powys	4
Essex	27
Gloucestershire	3
Greater Manchester	61
Gwent	12
Hampshire	24
Hertfordshire	18
Humberside	12
Kent	12
Lancashire	49
Leicestershire	28
Lincolnshire	13
Merseyside	42
Metropolitan	119
Norfolk	21
North Wales	6
North Yorkshire	16
Northamptonshire	19
Northumbria	53
Nottinghamshire	25
South Wales	23
South Yorkshire	46
Staffordshire	31
Suffolk	1
Surrey	10
Sussex	12
Thames Valley	26
Warwickshire	8
West Mercia	19
West Midlands	163
West Yorkshire	66
Wiltshire	7

Identity Cards

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effect that identity cards have had on the level of identity fraud in other European countries. [155341]

Beverley Hughes: The incorporation of advanced biometric information into identity documents and the development of an electronic national identity register were announced by my right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary, in his statement on a national identity cards scheme. These measures would provide a unique link between the identity card and the person to whom it was issued and help to ensure that fraudsters could not set up multiple identities. This should have a significant impact in reducing identity fraud.

Home Office officials have had detailed discussions with colleagues involved in the operation of identity card schemes in Italy, Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands and comprehensive information has been supplied by each of the EU member states on the operation of their card schemes. Lessons have been learned and where appropriate they have informed the development of our policy for an identity cards scheme.

Many EU identity card schemes were developed with other specific aims and objectives in mind such as population registration and not specifically implemented for countering identity fraud. As such, many identity cards are issued locally after checking available information e.g. birth certificates, information relating to an applicant's parents. In most EU countries, it is not necessary to give biometric information when applying for an identity card or accessing services.

The 'Identity Cards: The Next Steps' document (CM 6020) states that applications for one of the family of identity cards will require checks against other databases. These checks would confirm that a person had been known by a certain identity and lived at known addresses for a number of years. This information is more difficult to forge than e.g. birth certificates and follows recommendations made in 'Identity Fraud: A Study' conducted by the Cabinet Office and published in July 2002.

Many card schemes in other countries have been in place for many years and use mainly paper cards, which do not hold biometric data. With the passage of time, there is an increasing risk that fraudsters could obtain access to modern printing technology and use it to produce forged paper cards for the purpose of committing identity fraud. The absence of a central electronic identity register in many EU countries, increases the risks as an identity card (or biometric data) cannot be checked against a centrally held record of that information. As such organisations checking a card are only able to make visual checks e.g. to check that the photograph on an identity card looks like the person presenting the card and to check for no obvious alterations to the card itself.

In 'Identity Cards: The Next Steps' the Government stated that the National Identity Register will link each individual record to a biometric. This will prevent multiple identities being established and allow organisations to check a card at a level appropriate for that service.

The National Identity Register will be a single highly reliable record of a person's identity and will provide a secure means to verify identity where a registered person consents that their information can be verified by that held on the National Identity Register.

While a modern and effective card scheme would help to combat identity fraud, it does not mean that every card scheme, especially those that have been implemented some time ago, would have a similar or significant effect on countering this type of crime unless they have been regularly updated to stay one step ahead of fraudsters. It is therefore not possible to assess the effect that card schemes in other European countries have had on identity fraud.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what penalties or deterrents are proposed under the identity card scheme for employers who employ people illegally; and how this will differ from the current system. [156093]

Beverley Hughes: A common format identification card, able to verify identity to a high standard for all legal residents, would provide employers with a more reliable, quick and easy method of verifying identity and employment eligibility of potential employees. By so doing, it would ensure that employers are able to comply more easily with any requirements of legislation preventing illegal working. These requirements and the associated penalties are contained in immigration legislation, currently section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how an identity card will aid the police; and how this improves on tools and methods they already have in place. [156094]

Beverley Hughes: Identity fraud costs the economy at least £1.3 billion every year. Terrorists use false and multiple identities to help undertake and finance their activities in the United Kingdom and abroad. False and multiple identities are also essential "tools of the trade" for organised crime to facilitate money laundering and also other crimes such as people-trafficking and drug-trafficking. The development of unique identifiers linked to the National Identity Register will help tackle these problems allowing the police and other organisations greater certainty in the identification of individuals and helping prevent multiple identities being used for such purposes.

There is the potential for an identity cards scheme to assist shops owners and licensees control the sale of age-related products. The Government's plans for a national identity cards scheme would provide a nationally accepted and secure way of proving and determining age. Our current best cost estimates would fund the issuing of cards free to all 16-year-olds.

We would also expect that improvements in identity verification through the use of the card and central database will free up police time and resources. For example, the police would be able to check the biometric/card of an arrested person where no match is found on police records. There would be no need to require a card to be carried or produced because of the ability to check biometric information directly with National Identity Register. There are also cases where people may voluntarily show a card or allow biometric information to be checked, for instance after a road traffic incident.

Finally, while the police and other organisations will not have routine access to data stored on the National Identity Register, such access would be authorised in certain specific circumstances, for example the investigation of serious crime.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* mechanisms and *(b)* compensation schemes are proposed under the identity card scheme for individuals whose biometric data is compromised. [157030]

Beverley Hughes: It is too early at present to specify the exact procedures that will need to be in place if an individual's biometric data is compromised. However, as with any database of personal information, there will be a legal obligation under the Data Protection Act 1998 for the controller of the National Identity Register to ensure that the information held is accurate and secure and an avenue of complaint to the Information Commissioner is open in cases where any complaint cannot be resolved by the controller. Biometric information is no different from other types of personal information with regard to this obligation.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the advantages gained by other countries after the introduction of identity cards. [157258]

Beverley Hughes: Identity card schemes have existed in all EU countries for many years, with the exception of Denmark and Ireland.

Home Office officials have had detailed discussions with colleagues involved in the operation of identity card schemes in Italy, Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany and lessons learned have informed the development of policy where appropriate.

In addition, comprehensive information has been supplied by each of the EU member states on the operation of their card schemes, including the benefits associated with the card scheme.

Identity cards in most EU countries are used widely in dealings with central and local government and private sector organisations to establish identity and entitlement to services more securely. Databases of identity card holders are often used to help plan for, and administer, services more efficiently, and ensure that services are accessed by those entitled to receive them.

Many EU countries consider identity cards to be an important way of tackling illegal immigration and illegal working by reducing the 'pull factors' which attract illegal immigrants to their countries.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research has been conducted to establish the level of security threats in countries that have ID cards. [158708]

Beverley Hughes: There are very many factors which affect the level of security threats and it would not be possible to correlate the level of threat in different countries with their use of ID cards.

Terrorists use false and multiple identities to help undertake and finance their activities in the UK and abroad. The development of unique identifiers linked to the National Identity Register will help to disrupt terrorist activity and protect the public.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the consequences will be for refusal to identify oneself by the production of an identity card; [158711]

(2) if he will specify that organisations should not rely solely on an identity card to establish a person's identity. [158722]

Beverley Hughes: There will be no new power for the police to stop someone and demand them to produce their identity card. There will be no new sanctions against a person who refuses to identify themselves to the police either by means of an identity card or otherwise. However, the police do have powers to take steps to identify a person who has been arrested.

One of the key aims of the identity cards scheme is to ensure that free public services are only used by those entitled to them. As set out in "Identity Cards: the next steps" Cm 6020, production of a card to access public services will be in ways defined by those services. In the case of those services for which the devolved Administrations have responsibility, decisions on production of a card to access those services would be a matter for them. We are clear however that the use of the card for access to free public services would not prevent people without cards from accessing emergency services and a card would not be mandatory for verification of entitlement to other services until the appropriate further parliamentary decision on a move to compulsion.

There is also the potential to check identity against the National Identity Register without the production of a card since each individual's record is linked to a biometric that is unique to that person. This means that even without a card being produced, it will be possible to check someone's biometric information directly with the National Identity Register to establish his or her identity. This could be done with the person's consent or without consent in certain limited circumstances such as establishing the identity of arrested persons.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultations his Department has held with members of minority groups regarding identity cards. [160453]

Beverley Hughes: During the consultation process on what were then called "entitlement cards" the Home Office carried out quantitative research among the general public. A separate study was carried out among members of black and minority ethnic groups. The results of these surveys can be found in "Identity Cards: A Summary of Findings from the Consultation Exercise on Entitlement Cards and Identity Fraud" (CM6019) published in November 2003. Discussions continue between the Home Office and representative organisations like the Commission for Racial Equality and members of the Race Equality Advisory Panel.

The consultation also included qualitative research in focus groups and submissions were received from representatives of special interest groups, for example, the homeless, travellers, people living in rural areas and transgendered people. Full details can be found in the publication referred to above.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) under what circumstances local authorities check a person's identity; what difficulties in making such checks have been reported to him by local authorities; and how he expects the introduction of a national identity card to remedy these problems; [159753]

(2) what consultation he *(a)* has held and *(b)* plans to hold with local authorities regarding the national identity card scheme. [159754]

Beverley Hughes: Copies of the Government's Consultation Paper on the proposals for what were then called entitlement cards were sent to all local authorities in England and Wales and to all 32 councils in Scotland. Responses were received from 45 individual councils and from the Local Government Association (LGA). A summary of their comments can be found in the document "Identity Cards: A Summary of Findings from the Consultation Exercise on Entitlement Cards and Identity Fraud" (CM 6019 of November 2003). During the consultation period officials gave presentations to the LGA, the Welsh Local Authorities Forum, Local Authority Fraud Investigators and Local Authority Policy Officers. Contacts are maintained between the Home Office officials and the LGA.

Local authorities, like other organisations which interface with the public and provide services, are responsible for deciding how, and in what circumstances, they need to check someone's identity. While we have no record of any problems connected with identity checks by local authorities being reported to the Home Office, many local authorities welcomed the more reliable identity checks which would be facilitated by our scheme. A national identity card would help all service providers, including local authorities, by providing a single, secure and verifiable identity for all citizens and for foreign nationals legally resident here for more than three months. It will be for service providers to decide how they will use the card in the context of access to their services.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what powers police officers have to establish a person's identity; [159755]

(2) if he will make a statement on how identity cards will assist the police in stop and searches if carrying a card is to be voluntary. [159756]

Beverley Hughes: The police have powers to take steps to identify a person who has been arrested including checking biometric information. There are also classes of criminal offences which are non-arrestable and are enforced by sending a summons. In these situations, the police have to be certain of a person's name and address. If a person refuses to identify themselves in these circumstances or the police are not satisfied with the information given, they have a power of arrest after which biometric checks can be made.

Sections 9 and 10 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 has extended the circumstances in which the police may record biometric information without consent to

include recording from a person arrested for a recordable offence and detained in a police station. This addition to s61 and 63 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 will prevent persons who come into police custody and who may be wanted on a warrant or for questioning on other matters from avoiding detection by giving the police a false name and address. These provisions come into effect on 5 April 2004.

The National Identity Register will link each individual's record to a biometric that is unique to that person. This means that even without a card being produced, it will be possible to check someone's biometric information directly with the National Identity Register to establish his or her identity. This could be done with the person's consent or without consent in certain limited circumstances such as establishing the identity of arrested persons in line with the powers set out above.

Internet

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to prevent the circulation of offensive material through the internet; and if he will make a statement. [157314]

Paul Goggins: We continue to seek ways to disrupt the circulation of obscene and other illegal material on the internet through the criminal law and by co-operation with the authorities in other countries such as the United States of America, and with industry partners.

Jim Stephens

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the application of Mr. Jim Stephens, Ref. 51178115, to remain in the United Kingdom to be determined. [159414]

Beverley Hughes: Mr. Stephens' appeal against the refusal of leave to remain in the United Kingdom was forwarded to the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA) on 9 March. The IAA will notify Mr. Stephens of an appeal hearing date in due course.

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* resident groups and *(b)* community watch schemes in preventing crime. [159667]

Ms Blears: There has been no formal Home Office assessment of the effectiveness of residents' groups and watch schemes in reducing crime, although some individual projects have been evaluated.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that both resident groups and community watch schemes are effective in bringing communities together to prevent crime and reduce fear of crime.

Tenants' and residents' groups are particularly successful at building community spirit and articulating local needs and concerns resulting in enhanced trust and co-operation with Police.

Neighbourhood watch schemes are also regarded as one of the most effective examples in preventing crime and reducing the fear of crime. Over 155,000 Neighbourhood Watch schemes operate throughout the United Kingdom covering up to 27 per cent. of all households. 75 per cent. of the respondents to the 2000 British Crime Survey felt that Neighbourhood Watch schemes were effective in preventing crimes such as burglary.

The Home Office are in the process developing an Active Citizenship Centre, a virtual resource, to provide an overarching framework to assess systematically the evidence of the impact of citizens giving up their time to help their local community.

Prisoners (Accommodation on Release)

Mr. McCabe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were released from custodial sentence in the *(a)* most recent year for which figures are available, *(b)* previous three years and *(c)* previous five years; how many prisoners gave no fixed abode (NFA) as their address on release from custodial sentence; how many paedophiles were released from custodial sentence within these periods; and how many paedophiles gave NFA as their address within these periods on release from custodial sentence. [158064]

Paul Goggins: Information on the number of prisoners released from determinate sentences is given in the table.

Persons discharged from determinate sentences[1]: 1998–2003

1998	84,693
1999	89,765
2000	89,154
2001	85,290
2002	88,330
2003	86,995

[1] Excludes discharges following recall after release on licence, civil prisoners and fine defaulters

The Prison Service undertook a large-scale survey in March and April 2003 of sentenced prisoners nearing release. 29 per cent. said they did not have accommodation arranged on release, compared to 33 per cent. in a similar survey undertaken in November and December 2001. These surveys did not look separately at prisoners convicted of sex offences. However, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) provide a framework within which different agencies work together to manage the risks posed by sex offenders living in the community, including those arising from the absence of stable accommodation. The resettlement of sex offenders posing a serious risk of harm to the public is jointly managed by the police and the National Probation Service within these arrangements.

Registered sex offenders are also subject to the notification requirements of the Sex Offenders Act 1997. They are required to provide the police with their home address within three days of their release from prison. Where an offender does not have a home address (which is his sole or main residence in the United Kingdom), he is required to provide the police with an address of premises in the UK that he regularly visits.

Provisions in the Criminal Justice Act 2003 will formalise this multi-agency engagement by imposing a duty to co-operate with the MAPPA on a number of agencies, including local housing authorities and relevant registered social landlords.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the police *(a)* have been and *(b)* will be consulted about supervision arrangements under the proposed National Offender Management Service structure. [159813]

Paul Goggins: The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) implementation team has had discussions with members of the Police Service regarding the proposed NOMS structure and this will continue. The Association of Chief Police Officers have also received copies of the "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" document which sets out the Government's proposals for the reform of correctional services and sought views on implementation issues for the new National Offender Management Service.

Operation Safeguard

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost per prisoner per night of detention in a police cell under Operation Safeguard is, broken down by police force area. [160193]

Paul Goggins: There are currently no prisoners being held under Operation Safeguard in England and Wales, therefore there are no costs associated with the arrangement. For the average daily cost the last time Operation Safeguard was employed, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 8 December 2003, column 237W and 19 January 2004, column. 982W.

Persistent Offenders

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken to reduce persistent offending through targeting prolific offenders in *(a)* Ribble Valley and Fulwood and *(b)* Lancashire in each of the last five years; and whether such schemes are being trialled. [156636]

Paul Goggins: There are a number of initiatives to tackle persistent offenders in Ribble Valley, Fulwood and throughout Lancashire, which support the aims of the national Persistent Offender Scheme.

One such initiative is Operation Outmost. This is a trial cross-border police operation involving staff from Lancashire, North Yorkshire and British Transport Police. It targets persistent offenders who operate in rural areas such as Ribble Valley.

The Preston Tower Project, which covers Fullwood, was launched in 2002. It is an initiative targeting prolific offenders with drug addiction. In the area covered by the project there has been a 19 per cent. reduction in burglary (dwellings) and a 42 per cent. reduction in vehicle crime in the last 11 months. Other areas of Lancashire already have or are developing similar projects.

The Jigsaw Project, is a resettlement project that engages with 100 persistent offenders in Lancashire aged between 18 and 20-years-old. The project aids resettlement by linking into local drug treatment services.

In October 2003, Lord Falconer launched the North West's Prisoner Resettlement Strategy. The central purpose of the Strategy, which concentrates on persistent offenders, is to reduce crime and prevent re-offending through a co-ordinated and integrated Resettlement and Rehabilitation Strategy. Preston City Council, which covers Fulwood, is engaged in this work along with Blackburn and Darwen Councils.

An Intensive Control and Change Programme (ICCP) targeting persistent offenders aged 18 to 20-year-olds is running throughout Lancashire. Offenders are tagged and undergo intensive supervision during the day. They are kept off the streets by an overnight curfew.

All the other schemes except Operation Outmost are fully operational.

Police Cells

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list police station cells which have been certified in the manner required by section 14 of the Prison Act 1952. [160699]

Paul Goggins: The requirement in the Prison Act 1952 for the certification of cells does not apply to police cells. Under section 6 of the Imprisonment (Temporary Provisions) Act 1980, persons who may lawfully be detained in penal institutions in England and Wales, may be detained in police cells under the custody of a constable.

Prison Buildings

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the value of prison buildings in central *(a)* London, *(b)* Liverpool, *(c)* Leeds, *(d)* Manchester, *(e)* Sheffield and *(f)* Birmingham; and if he will make a statement. [156705]

Paul Goggins: The value of prison buildings used in the accounts calculated on a depreciated replacement cost basis which does not necessarily represent their disposal value. On this basis the current values of prisons in central city areas are:

Prisons in central city areas

	£
London	281,846,103
Liverpool	36,258,996
Leeds	27,264,606
Manchester	95,164,527
Sheffield	none
Birmingham	58,721,713

Prisoner Discharge Grants

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much the current prisoner discharge grant amounts to; when it was last revised; and what plans he has to re-examine the level of grant. [160636]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 11 March 2004]*: The standard rates of discharge grant paid are £46.75 (for prisoners aged 25 and older) or £37 (for prisoners aged 18 to 24). A higher rate of discharge grant (£94.40) is paid to prisoners on release only if there is a need to seek, obtain and pay for accommodation. It is only paid to prisoners with no accommodation arranged in advance if this arises through no fault of the prisoner. The current rates were set in 1995.

The Government are drawing up a National Rehabilitation Action Plan responding to the July 2002 Social Exclusion Unit report on reducing re-offending by released prisoners. The discharge grant is being reviewed as a part of this work.

Prisoner Statistics

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men were being held in prison on 8 March. [160637]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 11 March 2004]*: On 8 March 2004 there were 4,560 women and 70,447 men being held in Prison Service establishments in England and Wales.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were eligible on 8 March for early release. [160638]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 11 March 2004]*: Information on the number of prisoners who were eligible for early release on 8 March 2004 is not yet available.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were released on 8 March on early release. [160639]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 1i March 2004]*: Information on the number of prisoners who were released on 8 March 2004 on early release is not yet available.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were eligible for early release on 9 March. [161049]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 12 March 2004]*: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to her previous question (160638].

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were released on early release on 9 March. [161050]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 12 March 2004]*: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to her previous question (160639).

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were released on *(a)* 8 March and *(b)* 9 March. [161051]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 12 March 2004]*: Information on the number of prisoners who were released on 8 March 2004 and 9 March 2004 is not yet available.

Mr. David Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners there are in English prisons; and how many of these are in privately run prisons. [156704]

Paul Goggins: On 30 November 2003, there were 71,706 prisoners in English prisons. Of these, 5,709 were in privately run prisons.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the new prison wing for elderly prisoners in HMP Norwich will open; and what facilities will be provided in this wing that are unique to the care of the elderly. [157374]

Paul Goggins: The Elderly Life Sentence Prisoner unit at HMP/YOI Norwich is scheduled to open in late June 2004. Upon completion, this residential unit will provide accommodation to 15 elderly prisoners.

The design of the unit is sympathetic to the needs of the elderly. It is being built in a discrete area of the prison and all facilities are situated at ground floor level. The unit will fully comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the most recent average cost per year is of *(a)* keeping a prisoner in a general prison and *(b)* keeping a prisoner aged 65 years or over in HMP Kingston's specialised wing. [157375]

Paul Goggins: The average cost across all establishments of keeping a prisoner during the financial year 2002–03 was £24,241. This figure is expressed in resource terms, excluding headquarters costs, but including items such as the cost of capital and the cost of depreciation on Prison Service assets.

The Prison Service does not hold information on the costs of keeping individual groups of prisoners in particular prisons. The costs of keeping prisoners over the age of 65 in HMP Kingston are embedded in the broader costs of running the whole establishment and cannot be disaggregated.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners absconded from category D prisons in each year since 1997. [159280]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 5 March 2004]*: Categorisation relates to prisoners not prisons. Category D prisoners are those who it is assessed can be reasonably trusted in open conditions and the majority are held in open or semi-open prisons. Absconds from semi-open prisons are very few. The table shows the numbers of absconds in each year reported by open prisons.

	Number of absconds
1997	1,012
1998	880
1999	840

	Number of absconds
2000	781
2001	743
2002	825
2003	1,224

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed suicide attempts took place in prisons in England and Wales in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003. [160208]

Paul Goggins: Suicidal intent is difficult to establish. Data recording incidents of 'attempted suicide' are subsumed within those for self-harm, which covers all acts of self-injury.

Good care and support from staff saves many lives; 154 prisoners were resuscitated following self-harm incidents in 2002, and a further 211 prisoners were resuscitated in 2003. Reducing the number of self-inflicted deaths and instances of self-harm in prison establishments is a priority for Ministers and the Prison Service. A three-year programme to develop policies and practices to reduce prisoner suicide and manage self-harm in prisons is currently drawing to a close. The results of this programme and complementary research will inform future suicide prevention and self-harm management strategy.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) why prison is becoming a more common form of punishment; [148888]

(2) if he will make a statement on changes in *(a)* custody rates and *(b)* sentence lengths. [148893]

Paul Goggins: The main reason for the increased use of prison is the increased severity of sentencing. At magistrates courts the custody rate for indictable offences was 15 per cent. in 2002. This compares with 14 per cent. in 2001, ten per cent. in 1997 and five per cent. in 1992.

At the Crown court the custody rate for indictable offences was 63 per cent. in 2002, the same as in 2001. This compares with 60 per cent. in 1997 and 44 per cent. in 1992. For males aged 21 or over the average custodial sentence length was 27.8 months in 2002. This compares with 26.0 months in 2001, 24.2 months in 1997 and 21.1 months in 1992.

The new Sentencing Guidelines Council met for the first time on 5 March 2004 and will provide a comprehensive set of sentencing guidelines for all offences. This will enable all courts and practitioners to adopt a consistent approach to sentencing.

Probation Cases

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases were dealt with on average per probation officer in the last year for which figures are available; and what the projected caseload is in the next three years. [155960]

Paul Goggins: The average number of offenders on supervision per officer[1] as at 31 December 2002 was 21.0.

The projected probation service caseload for the next three years for England and Wales is as follows:

	Total
2003–04	225,000
2004–05	233,500
2005–06	248,800

Figures for projected caseload per officer are not available.

[1] This includes Maingrade Probation Officers, Senior Probation Officers, temporary Probation Officers, Senior Practitioners and Probation Services Officers, all of whom are involved with the supervision of offenders.

Re-offending

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish his latest action plan following the recommendations contained in the Social Exclusion Unit report on Reducing Re-offending by Ex-prisoners. [157507]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* The Home Office will shortly publish a National Rehabilitation Action Plan which will form the Government's initial response to the Social Exclusion Unit's report.

Restorative Justice

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether restorative justice is used within the justice system; [155338]

(2) what research he has conducted into the *(a)* effectiveness and *(b)* viability of restorative justice. [155337]

Paul Goggins: Restorative justice brings victims (who wish it) and offenders into a process of managed communication in order to repair the harm caused by the offence.

It is an integral part of a number of interventions in the youth justice system. Final Warnings are increasingly administered restoratively and Referral Orders, rolled out nationally in April 2002, are based on restorative principles.

In the adult justice system, several police forces facilitate restorative cautions and the Criminal Justice Act 2003 will introduce the new conditional caution, planned for use later this year, which police will be able to administer restoratively. Work has also been carried out in a number of probation areas and in several prisons.

The Government are keen to build on these developments.

There is already strong evidence that victims benefit; studies suggest that at least 75 per cent. of victims who take part in restorative justice are glad they did so. Research into the Referral Order has shown that victims' experiences were "overwhelmingly positive".

International studies and early evidence from the United Kingdom about the effects on re-offending is encouraging but inconclusive. There is a need for further research, in particular regarding the effects for different offence types. This is why, as part of the Crime Reduction Programme, the Home Office funded three pilot schemes to test the effectiveness of restorative

justice for adults at various stages of the criminal justice system. The first report of an independent evaluation of these schemes is planned for Autumn 2004 with a final report in 2007.

The Home Office is also developing a research project to evaluate restorative justice as a diversion from prosecution. This is planned to commence in 2004.

Robert Dymond

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when transport will be provided to convey Robert Dymond from HMP Altcourse to HMP Guys Marsh; and if he will make a statement. [157401]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* I have been assured that Mr. Dymond will be transferred to HMP Guys Marsh during week commencing 8 March 2004.

Arrangements had been made to transfer Mr. Dymond to HMP Guys Marsh week commencing 9 February, however due to continuing population pressures and the need to redirect transport to help ease these pressures in the north west the transfer was postponed.

Sentencing Guidelines Council

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the *(a)* work and *(b)* effectiveness of the Sentencing Guidelines Council will be assessed. [159807]

Paul Goggins: The Sentencing Guidelines Council has only just been established. In the longer term we expect to see evidence of its effectiveness in terms of greater consistency in sentencing.

The Government believes that prison should be reserved for serious, dangerous and seriously persistent offenders, and that others are better punished in the community. The Council's work will lead to greater consistency in sentencing , and to a rebalancing between the use of custody and community sentences. As early priorities, the Council will formulate guidelines on sexual offences and on the new generic community sentence. More consistent and effective sentencing should in turn lead to a reduction in re-offending.

Shaw Inquiry Reports

Mr. Patrick Hall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will publish the reports of the inquiries by Steven Shaw into *(a)* allegations of racism among Group 4/Global Solutions staff at the Yarl's Wood detention centre and *(b)* the lessons learned from the Yarl's Wood fire. [159608]

Beverley Hughes: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for North-East Bedfordshire (Alistair Burt) on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 906W.

Supervision and Monitoring Schemes

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what areas intensive supervision and monitoring schemes will be implemented. [159805]

Paul Goggins: Currently there are 14 Intensive Supervision and Monitoring Schemes (ISMs) running in Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Grimsby, Hastings, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Nottingham and Stoke funded or part-funded by the National Probation Service until March 2004.

The proposals contained in Reducing Crime—Changing Lives and the provisions contained in the Criminal Justice Act 2003 will shape the way work with persistent offenders is developed in the future. Many elements of the ISMs will satisfy the requirements of the new generic sentence, and will also contribute to Custody Minus, Intermittent Custody and other intensive interventions such as the Intensive Control and Change Programme.

Future plans to work with persistent offenders will also be incorporated into the regional resettlement strategies which are currently being developed.

Travellers (Photographic Images)

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) for how long and where photographic images of travellers using *(a)* Dover Docks and *(b)* other ports are stored; and to what purpose they are put; [157698]

(2) if he will make a statement on the use of cameras to photograph travellers using *(a)* Dover Docks and *(b)* other ports; [157699]

(3) how many people are employed in taking, processing, reviewing and storing photographic images stored of travellers using *(a)* Dover Docks and *(b)* other ports; and by whom they are employed; [157700]

(4) when he expects to reply to the letter of 15 January from the hon. Member for Spelthorne, (Home Office reference: PO2079/4) regarding the use of cameras to photograph travellers at Dover Docks. [157701]

Beverley Hughes: The police and Her Majesty's Customs and Excise (HMCE) have a key role in combating organised crime at ports, including terrorism. Kent Police and HMCE jointly operate a frontier control Automatic Number Plate Reader (ANPR) system at some Kent ports. This system "reads" the vehicle registrations of passing vehicles, and, at various key locations within the port, captures passing vehicles and drivers on camera. The system is automatic and entails no physical human intervention.

The system is operated with due regard to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidance on the operation of ANPR, and within the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. Images are retained for one year. In the interest of operational security I am unable to release information about where the images are stored.

The ANPR system is administered by three dedicated staff: (two from Her Majesty Customs and one from Kent Police). Two other Kent Police staff are dedicated to the technical maintenance of the system. In addition to the ANPR system, Her Majesty's Customs and

Excise use Closed Circuit Television to assist in cases of complaint against the actions of officers and in cases of assault on their officers.

Images of travellers are kept for a limited period only, normally a week, unless there is reason to keep them for evidential purposes.

Westminster Hall

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159623]

Mr. Blunkett: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Leader of the House on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

Young Offenders

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the most recent figures are for the proportion of 16 to 18-year-olds who have *(a)* been in custody and *(b)* served a period of community service who subsequently (i) re-offend and (ii) are reconvicted. [159511]

Paul Goggins: Data on reoffending are not available.

78 per cent. of 16, 17 and 18-year-olds discharged from custody in 1999 were reconvicted of a standard list offence within two years.

76 per cent. of 16, 17 and 18-year-olds commencing community sentences in 1999 were reconvicted of a standard list offence within two years.

The reconviction rates supplied are not adjusted to take out convictions for offences committed prior to either discharge from custody or commencement of the community sentence. Hence some of these reconvictions may not represent reoffending subsequent to custodial discharge or commencement of community sentence.

Reconviction rates should not be used to compare effectiveness between different sentences. This is because the characteristics of offenders receiving different types of sentences may be quite different.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the place of education within young offenders' institutions. [158730]

Paul Goggins: In order to have an impact on reducing re-offending, the disproportionately low skills and exclusion from learning among young people coming into custody must be addressed. The Prison Service aims to equip all offenders with the skills to enhance their employability—providing them with an alternative to crime—and to enable them to make a positive contribution to society.

Additional money has been invested this year in learning for young offenders aged 18. The Prison Service is looking to Heads of Learning and Skills in each establishment to promote a culture of learning so that we can continue to widen access and improve quality.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what opportunities exist for young offenders to obtain educational *(a)* qualifications and *(b)* accreditation. [158731]

Paul Goggins: Every Young Offender Institution has an education department which is required to offer mainstream qualifications as delivered in community settings. Most of these are divided into modules enabling short-term prisoners to work towards a full qualification, which can then be completed upon their release. Literacy and numeracy are assessed using a national test that is available weekly.

This year, additional funding of over £4 million has been provided to enable the Young Offender and female estate to buy in and support more teaching hours. Heads of Learning and Skills in each Young Offender Institute are helping to increase accredited learning opportunities across the range of activities such as vocational training, supported by £20 million of capital investment through our "learning to earning" programme.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has made to *(a)* assess the extent of and *(b)* treat gambling among offenders, with particular reference to young offenders. [158346]

Paul Goggins: The new adult Offender Assessment System, (OASys,) developed jointly by the Prison and Probation Services and currently being rolled-out, contains a question on budgeting that provides offenders with an opportunity to raise matters about financial difficulties related to gambling. In addition, OASys contains a self-assessment questionnaire for offenders that includes a question asking whether gambling is a problem for them and, if so, whether it is linked to their offending. Analysis of a sample of self-assessments in 2003 for 711 prisoners showed that 2 per cent. said that gambling was a problem and 0.4 per cent. said it was linked to their offending. A sample of about 2,200 offenders under probation showed that 2.3 per cent. said that gambling was a problem and 0.7 per cent. said it was linked to their offending.

The Youth Justice Board uses a separate assessment system for juvenile offenders (aged under 18 years) called ASSET, which provides an opportunity to detail any problems that should be highlighted and this could include gambling.

Treatment for offenders with gambling problems, whether adults, young offenders or juveniles, is left to the discretion of individual prisons, young offender institutions, probation areas and youth offending teams. A number have established links with organisations such as Gamblers Anonymous and GamCare to provide assistance for offenders with gambling addiction problems, by individual referrals or through groups. Probation areas may also make referrals to Gordon House, a specialist hostel for gamblers.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 16 March 2004

SCOTLAND

Gourock Transport Interchange

6. **David Cairns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with Network Rail Scotland on the Gourock Transport Interchange. [160306]

Mr. Darling: I have regular discussions with Network Rail about various topics. However, the proposed Gourock Interchange is a matter for the Scottish Executive and Inverclyde Council.

Economic Inactivity

7. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the level of economic inactivity in Scotland. [160307]

Mrs. McGuire: The latest Labour Market statistics published show 680,000 people in Scotland aged between 16 and 64 economically inactive.

Employment

8. **Miss Begg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on employment levels in Scotland. [160308]

Mr. Darling: Employment in Scotland is at historic high levels. The number employed has risen by 119,000 since spring 1997 and the employment rate is close to the UK average, comparing favourably with the rates of our main competitors.

Electoral Arrangements

9. **Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to announce the chairman of his commission on boundary differences and voting systems in Scotland. [160309]

14. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to announce the chairman of his commission on boundary differences and voting systems in Scotland. [160315]

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to announce the chairmanship of his commission on boundary differences and voting systems in Scotland. [160313]

Mr. Darling: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of earlier today to my right hon. Friend the Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes).

10. **Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Scottish Executive regarding the introduction of new election systems. [160310]

Mr. Darling: As I indicated during Second Reading of the Scottish Parliament (Constituencies) Bill on 9 February, in setting out the proposals for a commission to review boundary differences and voting systems, I consulted the First Minister, who welcomed taking the debate forward.

Affordable Housing

11. **Mr. Lazarowicz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding fiscal measures to encourage the provision of affordable housing in Scotland. [160311]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend has discussions from time to time with the Chancellor on a range of matters. The Government look forward to Kate Barker's final report on the issues affecting housing supply and proposals for addressing these constraints. This will be issued shortly and it would be unwise for me to make any comment in advance.

Financial Sector

12. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Executive on the performance of the financial sector in Scotland. [160312]

Mr. Darling: I regularly meet Scottish Executive colleagues to discuss matters relating to the Scottish economy. The financial services sector in Scotland remains of crucial importance to the health of the Scottish economy. Output has continued to grow in recent years and the sector currently employs over 100,000 people in Scotland.

Common Agricultural Policy

13. **Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to visit the Scottish Parliament to discuss the implications of common agricultural policy reform. [160314]

Mr. Darling: I have no plans to visit the Scottish Parliament to discuss the implications of common agricultural policy reform.

ADVOCATE-GENERAL

Devolution

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Advocate-General what devolution issues have been raised with her since 10 February. [160316]

The Advocate-General for Scotland: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mr. Reid).

Human Rights

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Advocate-General what European Convention on Human Rights issues she has scrutinised in the past month. [160370]

The Advocate-General for Scotland: Since 10 February I received intimation of, and scrutinised, 39 devolution issues, all of which concerned Convention rights. They related to matters such as pre-trial delay, the system for setting the punishment part of life sentences, failure to communicate information required by sea fishing measures and self-incrimination. In the civil sphere, the issues of refusal of scheduled monument consent and breach of prison rules were considered. I also routinely consider Convention rights in the context of my other ministerial functions.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

House of Lords Reform

25. **Tony Wright:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs, he will make a statement on reform of the second chamber. [161265]

30. **David Taylor:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs, when proposals for completing the reform of the House of Lords will be published; and if he will make a statement. [161271]

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the functions of the upper House. [161268]

Mr. Leslie: The Government set out proposals to remove the remaining hereditary peers from the House of Lords in the consultation paper issued in September. Without a consensus in Parliament on other issues, such as the wider composition of the second chamber, the Government will make progress where we can, keeping an open mind on proposals for further reform.

Lord Chancellor

27. **Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the continued existence of the office of Lord Chancellor. [161267]

Mr. Leslie: The Government have announced their intention to abolish the Office of Lord Chancellor, and introduced legislation to do so on 24 February. The Government believe that it is no longer tenable for a Cabinet Minister to head the judiciary. The Government see this, together with setting up a Supreme Court for the UK independent of the legislature and a new Judicial Appointments Commission, as important steps in the modernisation of our constitution and our judicial system.

28. **Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when Ministers in the Department last met the Lord Chief Justice to discuss plans to abolish the position of Lord Chancellor. [161269]

Mr. Leslie: My noble Friend the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice regularly discuss judicial issues and constitutional reform.

They last met to discuss constitutional reform on the 18 December 2003. Subsequent to this meeting, they have also had several telephone and other conversations in which constitutional reform formed a part.

Witness Protection

29. **Jane Griffiths:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures he plans to encourage witnesses and victims to come forward and give evidence in court. [161270]

Mr. Leslie: Last July, the Government published a National Strategy setting out the steps we are taking to deliver improved services to victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system.

At its heart is the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill, introduced last November and containing a number of measures aimed at encouraging more witnesses to come to court and give evidence.

Supreme Court

31. **Chris Grayling:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the proposed supreme court. [161272]

Mr. Burns: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the establishment of a supreme court. [161266]

Mr. Leslie: The Government are committed to the objective of the Constitutional Reform Bill being enacted in this Parliament.

Bail (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations he has received on the law regarding access to bail in Northern Ireland. [159555]

Mr. Spellar: I have been asked to reply.

During the course of the Government's public consultation on (what were then) proposals for a Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, several responses were received which included comments on the legislative proposals in respect of bail. In its recent report, 'The Illegal Drugs Trade and Drug Culture in Northern Ireland', the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee made recommendations in respect of the granting of bail in cases of drug trafficking and in cases where representations have been made against bail being granted. The Government have also been working closely with criminal justice agencies on the law and the operation of the bail process.

In recognising that bail is an important issue, the Government have brought forward a number of new measures including the creation of new offences of failing to surrender to bail, and a new power of arrest for breach of bail conditions in the aforementioned Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

Further provisions are being created under the Justice (NI) Bill to facilitate the police in bail enforcement. These new measures will provide the prosecution with a right of appeal against the granting of bail by a magistrates court, as well as the creation of new offences of failing to surrender to bail in Scheduled cases and an increased maximum sentence for the same offences in non-scheduled cases.

Magistrates Courts (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many magistrates courts have been closed in Wales since 1997. [160909]

Mr. Leslie: MCCs are not required by statute to inform my Department of proposed courthouse closures that are not subject to an appeal. The following table shows that there have been 10 magistrates court closures in Wales since 1997, compiled from the information that is available to my Department.

Magistrates court	*Date of closure*
Machynlleth	31 March 2003
Lampeter	9 June 2003
Tenby	30 June 2003
Bridgenorth	31 January 2002
Abergele	31 December 2000
Corwen	31 December 1998
Bargoed	31 December 1997
Monmouth	31 December 1997
Pontlottyn	31 December 1997
Pontypool	31 December 1997

Recruitment

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the cost of recruitment of civil servants for the Department or its predecessors was in each financial year since 1996–97, broken down by *(a)* delegated or contracted out recruitment procedures and *(b)* recruitment procedures carried out by the Department. [158184]

Mr. Lammy: Information about recruitment costs is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Smoking Room

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Chairman of the Catering Committee when the Smoking Room was renamed Members' Smoke Room as set out on the survey card for that room. [160914]

Mr. Dennis Turner: I am happy to be able to reassure the hon. Member for Lichfield that the Members' Smoking Room has not been renamed. Reference to the "Members' Smoke Room" was an error and the customer feedback cards bearing this title have been withdrawn. I thank the hon. Member for pointing out this mistake.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Parliamentary Questions

Miss McIntosh: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners when he will reply to the question tabled for oral answer by the hon. Member for Vale of York, reference 158945. [161394]

Sir Stuart Bell: My answer was submitted on 8 March.

In that answer, I said that in 1996 the total stipend cost for parochial clergy (not including Employer's National Insurance contributions) was approximately £130.5 million. In 2003 the figure was approximately £151.8 million.

St. Giles, Imber

Dr. Murrison: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what plans the Commissioners have for the future of St. Giles's Church, Imber. [161304]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Commissioners had a helpful meeting on 19 January about the future of this church with Ministers from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Ministry of Defence. In particular the possibility of an endowment to facilitate the vesting of the church in the Churches Conservation Trust was discussed. There will be further discussions between the Ministers and the Commissioners are waiting to hear the outcome.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Abattoirs

Mr. O'Hara: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs where information is held about the number of charges brought against abattoirs for breaches of meat hygiene and animal welfare regulations which are withdrawn before they come to court. [160416]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* Information about the number of charges brought against abattoirs that are withdrawn before they come to court is recorded on individual case files.

Animal Welfare

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will undertake a welfare study on deer at the Baronsdown deer sanctuary. [160172]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is not intending to undertake a survey on the welfare of wild deer at Baronsdown deer sanctuary

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether any deer carcases from the Baronsdown deer sanctuary, suspected of being infected with bovine tuberculosis, will be disposed of at an appropriate plant under the EU Animal By-Products Regulation. [160173]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Animal By-Products Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 requires, among other things, that wild animals suspected of being infected with diseases communicable to animals and humans, such as bovine TB, are disposed of using one of the following methods:

Incineration;

Rendering in an approved plant followed by incineration; or

Pressure rendering in an approved plant followed by landfill.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it her policy to use the proposed Animal Welfare Bill to ban the sale and use of electronic shock collars. [160908]

Mr. Bradshaw: We do not expect the proposed Animal Welfare Bill to set out detail on what equipment may or may not be used on animals. But we anticipate that the Bill will provide powers for the Secretary of State to make regulations or issue codes of practice on such points, in order to improve animal welfare. Whether these powers will be used in respect of electronic dog collars has yet to be decided.

Carbon Emissions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the annual level of carbon emissions resulting from electrical appliances being left in standby mode. [156342]

Mr. Morley: The estimate of the Government's Market Transformation Programme is that consumer electronics, home computing equipment, domestic cooking equipment and office equipment left in stand-by mode accounted for approximately 600,000 tonnes of carbon (6.4TWh) in the UK in 2002.

There is further energy consumption, for which we do not have firm estimates at present, from washing machines, dishwashers and other white goods which have a stand-by mode; from consumer electronic equipment using an external power supply that continues to consume energy when plugged in but not in use; and from domestic personal computer equipment where the stand-by facilities are not properly enabled. Taken together, these sources of consumption may bring the overall figure to around one million tonnes of carbon.

In order to try to tackle this problem the Market Transformation Programme (www.mtprog.com) has been encouraging manufacturers to reduce both the "on" and the stand-by power consumption of household appliances through the adoption of design improvements, voluntary codes of conduct, and best practice guidelines and targets. This approach has been fairly successful in respect of televisions: an EU-wide voluntary agreement will mean that the majority of new televisions sold in the UK will soon consume around 1 watt of power in stand-by mode rather than the 3–8 watts consumed by older models. We expect this agreement to be extended to cover DVD players shortly. A similar agreement for external power supplies aims to encourage new power supplies consuming around half a watt in stand-by mode compared to the present average of just over 2 watts.

In addition, the Government's initiative on sustainable procurement, announced last autumn, includes a requirement for government departments which purchase computers and televisions to specify low stand-by power requirements.

Cetaceans

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action her Department is taking to prevent the accidental deaths of *(a)* dolphins and *(b)* porpoises in UK fishing activities. [160237]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government have funded a number of research projects to identify fisheries in which accidental deaths of dolphin and porpoise bycatch occurs and to develop and trial measures to reduce this bycatch. This work has identified in particular a dolphin bycatch problem in the offshore pair trawl fishery for bass. Trials of an escape grid mechanism to reduce this bycatch are currently taking place. Work has also identified that acoustic devices known as pingers are effective in reducing bycatch of harbour porpoises in fixed gear fisheries.

Building on this and other research work this Department, along with Devolved Administrations, published in March 2003 the UK Small Cetacean Bycatch Response Strategy which made a number of recommendations for measures to reduce bycatch. As EU measures will be most effective in reducing bycatch in community waters, the implementation of this strategy will need to take account of the outcome of current discussions on European Commission proposals to reduce bycatch. I welcome the Commission proposals and I am looking for their early implementation.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action her Department is taking to support the work of the Natural History Museum in monitoring *(a)* porpoise and *(b)* dolphin deaths. [160238]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department provides funding for the Natural History Museum's Cetacean (and Turtle) Strandings Scheme, which monitors and investigates porpoise and dolphin strandings around the UK. The work is carried out in partnership with the Institute of Zoology and the Scottish Agricultural College.

Defra and its predecessors have supported this work since 1990 and my Department is currently providing the Natural History Museum with funding of £1,610,966.00 for the scheme (for the period 2000–01 to 2005–06). This brings our total support over the last 10 years to over £2.7 million.

The work provides valuable information on causes of, and trends in, cetacean mortality around the British Isles. It involves maintaining records of stranded cetaceans and analysing tissue and bone samples to enable their physiology and reaction to various pollutants and chemicals to be assessed. The work has developed a number of methodologies which have

provided significant advances in the study of cetaceans. The maintenance of a tissue bank provides a useful source of material for many other organisations and individuals undertaking research into marine mammals. Data gleaned from this research have also been used within Defra to examine the impact on marine life of agricultural pesticides run-off, and to examine the impacts of pollutants on marine mammals.

Investigation of cetacean strandings under this scheme contributes towards the UK's systems of monitoring bycatch under the requirements of the EC Habitats Directive, and to our commitments to study cetacean strandings under the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS).

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action her Department is taking to implement the EU Habitats Directive in respect of preventing fishing fleets from killing *(a)* dolphins and *(b)* porpoises. [160239]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) requires member states to undertake surveillance of the conservation status of cetaceans, to monitor the incidental capture and killing of cetaceans and, in the light of information gathered, to take further research or conservation measures as required to ensure incidental capture and killing does not have a significant negative impact on the species. The Department implements these requirements through support for numerous research, data collection and surveillance projects.

The UK was one of several EU member states that provided funding for the collaborative Small Cetacean Abundance in the North Sea (SCANS) survey in 1994. The Department is now committing further funds (£275,000) to support another such survey (entitled SCANS II) to repeat and extend the work carried out in 1994.

We have also provided funding amounting to over £2.7 million over 10 years for the Natural History Museum's long-term research into cetacean strandings in the UK. In addition, we have commissioned a number of specific research projects during the last decade monitoring bycatch levels in specific fisheries and researching potential measures to reduce bycatch. Last year the Department committed a further £1 million to more research in this area.

In 2003 the Department also produced the UK Small Cetacean Bycatch Response Strategy consultation paper. One of the recommendations contained in the Strategy in respect of the Habitats Directive is for the UK to develop an expanded bycatch monitoring scheme to assess levels of bycatch in UK fisheries at a statistically valid level. We shall now consider how best to develop such a scheme to also take into account recent European Commission proposals for the reduction of cetacean bycatch, including requirements for monitoring.

Dairy Farming

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her Department's response to the Colman Report on the dairy industry. [156443]

Alun Michael: The Dairy Supply Chain Forum, commissioned this report with funding from Defra, the Dairy Industry Association and the Milk Development Council, together with project advice from the NFU, in order to help inform decision making on the dairy aspects of CAP reform. The conclusions of the report were considered, along with a number of other factors, in our decision on the implementation of the Single Farm Payment in England.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what account she took of the impact on milk prices of moving to a dynamic hybrid system of Common Agricultural Policy reform. [156444]

Alun Michael: The model of decoupled payment instituted in England should not impact on milk prices, if farmers treat their payments as decoupled. Decoupled payments are by their nature not linked to production and should not therefore be used to offset the cost of production. If some farmers treat their payments as coupled and use them to subsidise production, this will tend to reduce prices for all dairy farmers. We believe that the transition to an area based payment will result in a purer form of decoupling that will more completely break the link between production and subsidy.

Fishermen's Compensation

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many boats qualify for compensation as a result of the loss of fishing owing to the development of the Shellhaven Port facility; [159671]

(2) what compensation is available in respect of the loss of the Hole Haven fishery in the Thames Estuary as a result of the development of Shellhaven Port; [159672]

(3) if she will make a statement on the impact of the Thames Estuary P&O Shellhaven Port development application on *(a)* the local fishing industry and *(b)* the viability of the fisheries and spawning grounds. [159680]

Mr. Bradshaw: Proposals for development of a new container port at London Gateway/Shellhaven are still subject to the statutory planning approvals process. Although I understand that no decisions have yet been taken, these are matters for the First Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Transport. The developer will also require a FEPA licence from my Department but no application has yet been received.

The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), an Executive Agency of Defra, provides expert scientific advice on marine and freshwater issues. It has contributed to the recent public inquiry into the Shellhaven scheme given the international importance of the Thames Estuary as an area for sole spawning and juvenile sole. CEFAS has recommended that further survey work be carried out and assessment made of whether seasonal restrictions on dredging may be necessary to mitigate any adverse impact.

Compensation for the possible loss of fishing is a matter for the developer and the various fisheries organisations to reach agreement on.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the decision by a State Veterinary officer to renew Mr. Bobby Waugh's swill feeding licence 14 days before the foot and mouth disease outbreak began. [159013]

Mr. Bradshaw: The inspection carried out at Bobby Waugh's swill feeding premises 26 days before the foot and mouth disease outbreak began was the latest in a series of routine visits that were carried out to such premises to ensure compliance with the licensing conditions. The visits that the SVS carry out were aimed at trying to ensure maintenance of acceptable standards, heightened awareness of the risks associated with this procedure and the need for these standards to be maintained, and early detection of any problems that occur.

As no evidence was found at the time of the visit to indicate that the licensing conditions were not being complied with, the licence was renewed. I am satisfied that the visit was carried out to the standards required at the time and that the inspecting officer did everything that would reasonably have been expected to ensure compliance with the conditions.

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she has taken as a consequence of the recommendations contained within the EU report DG (SANCO)/3367/2001-MR Final regarding the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the United Kingdom. [159029]

Mr. Bradshaw: The recommendations in DG (SANCO) 3367/2001 were: to improve official controls over the disposal of waste food from catering establishments, and, to improve official controls over the disposal of waste food from prohibited sources at point of entry and the safe destruction of seized products.

The report recognised that the action already taken to ban the feeding of swill to livestock that the UK introduced in May 2001, "greatly" reduced the risk of introducing and spreading FMD or CSF from waste food. Following the introduction of the ban former swill feeders and processors of waste from catering establishments were monitored. For the 12 month period after the ban visits were made to former swill feeder premises to check compliance with the new requirements. The visits took place after approximately 2 weeks, 1 month, 2 months, 6 months and 12 months from the date of the ban. Where pigs were being kept on former swill feeding premises feed samples were taken if there was reason to consider that meat or meat products were being fed. Where non-compliance was found the local authorities have taken enforcement action.

Additionally we have instigated a rolling action plan to maintain awareness of the importance of disposing of food waste safely. We consider that we have in place all the necessary controls but also, as part of our action plan, we write annually to the enforcement authorities that visit catering establishments reminding them of the provisions of the Animal By-Products legislation. We have also had assistance from the Environment Agency concerning disposal at landfill sites and inspections of these by the State Veterinary Service have been instigated. These actions will be repeated as part of our rolling plan. Other actions include providing advice to new pig keepers on restrictions on what may be fed to their pigs and the identification of new pig keepers. We are also concerned about the disposal of waste food by the general public and are considering a general awareness campaign. This is a matter of the utmost concern and we shall not cease in our actions aimed at ensuring that the risks from waste food are minimised.

Forestry Commission

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Forestry Commission as to the advisability of issuing *(a)* restoration agreements and *(b)* fines for those who unwittingly offend. [160231]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have not had any discussions with the Forestry Commission on restoration agreements as the Forestry Commission do not issue such agreements.

GM Crops

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the results of the GM herbicide review undertaken by the Swedish herbicide authorities on behalf of the EU; and whether these results will inform her decision on the granting of herbicide approval for Liberty herbicide to be used in the management of Chardon LL fodder maize. [160580]

Alun Michael: The EU review of glufosinate ammonium is ongoing. Officials in the Pesticides Safety Directorate received a copy of the Swedish Authorities' draft assessment report in December 2003 and a series of EU expert working groups are due to meet over the summer to discuss various aspects of the report. Any information arising from the report that might be relevant to the scientific evaluation of any application for the approval for the commercial use of Liberty on Chardon LL fodder maize will be taken into account along with the data submitted in support of the application itself. Only if Ministers are satisfied, on the basis of the expert advice of the independent Advisory Committee on Pesticides, that the use proposed by the applicant is safe to people and the environment will approval be granted.

Ligula Tapeworm

Mr. Peter Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if her Department will carry out research into the spread of ligula tapeworm in fish by cormorants wintering in the UK. [160899]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has no plans to carry out research into the spread of ligula tapeworm in fish.

Operation Artemis

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the police with regard to Operation Artemis; when she last met the Chief Constable of North Wales to discuss Operation Artemis; and if she will make a statement on her policy on Operation Artemis. [160085]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has had no direct discussions with the Chief Constable of North Wales concerning Operation Artemis. This Government warmly welcomes the launch of Operation Artemis by the police and other partners to combat the illegal persecution of hen harriers, which face extinction in England as a result of illegal killing.

Pesticides

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the results have been of the consultation on no crop spray buffer zones; and whether she proposes to introduce no crop spray buffer zones. [162027]

Alun Michael: There has been a substantial response to the no-spray buffer zone consultation and all the responses are currently being assessed. A range of opinions was expressed and the practical options are currently being evaluated. Once this work has been completed Ministers will be in a position to consider the way forward and take decisions.

Rights of Way (Motorcyclists)

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will meet interest groups representing motorcyclists as part of the consultation on the use of mechanically propelled vehicles on rights of way. [161123]

Alun Michael: I met representatives of motor vehicle user groups last year and I expect to meet them again in future. I have decided to wait until all responses to the consultation have been received and analysed before meeting any of the interested parties to discuss the proposals.

TREASURY

Civil Servants (Relocation)

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the greatest number of civil servants that could be moved from central London to other parts of the country; and if he will make a statement. [161953]

Mr. Boateng: Sir Michael Lyons' Independent Review of Public Sector Relocation published its final report on 15 March. The report includes an assessment of the scope for relocating public sector activity from London and the South East. Copies are available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the initial set-up costs of relocating 20,000 civil servants away from the South East. [161954]

Mr. Boateng: Sir Michael Lyons' Independent Review of Public Sector Relocation published its final report on 15 March. The report provides an estimate of the costs and savings associated with relocating public sector activity. Copies are available in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to make an announcement about the relocation of civil servants away from London and the South East. [161955]

Mr. Boateng: Sir Michael Lyons' Independent Review of Public Sector Relocation published its final report on 15 March. Copies are available in the Library of the House.

Job Vacancies (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many job vacancies there were in Crosby in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003. [160528]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Claire Curtis-Thomas, dated March 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about job vacancies in Crosby. (160528)

According to Jobcentre Plus administrative records the number of unfilled vacancies in the Crosby area was 148 on average during 1997. This represents only a proportion of all the vacancies available, as not all vacancies are notified to Jobcentres.

Jobcentre vacancy statistics were withdrawn from National Statistics in September 2001 as a result of distortions to the data which occurred following the introduction of new administrative procedures by Jobcentre Plus. Comparable figure for vacancies in Crosby in 2003 are therefore unavailable.

Correspondence

Mr. Burns: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the hon. Member for West Chelmsford will receive a reply to his letter of 21 November 2003, PO Ref: 4/17287/2003. [160369]

John Healey: I have done so.

Computer Equipment (Tax Exemption)

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many businesses in *(a)* Burton constituency and *(b)* Staffordshire have benefited from the 100 per cent. tax exemption for the purchase of computer and internet equipment. [161839]

Dawn Primarolo: Information is not available to enable reliable estimates to be made.

Housing Stock Transfers

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether large-scale voluntary transfers of council housing are liable for VAT. [161511]

John Healey: There is no VAT due on large-scale voluntary transfers of council housing.

National Insurance

Ms Drown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 112–13W, on National Insurance, what the cost to the Treasury would be in each case. [161544]

Dawn Primarolo: A reduction in the lower earnings limit would not increase revenue from contributions, but would increase the future cost of paying contributory benefits and the cost of contracted-out rebates. I regret that it would be possible to quantify this only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Denham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many individuals pay self-employed National Insurance contributions. [161633]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my right hon. Friend to table 10.2 of the Annual Abstract, which can be found on the ONS website www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_compendia/Aa2004/AA20Q 4.pdf.

Mr. Denham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the change in payments to the National Insurance Fund that would accrue if all those paying self-employed National Insurance contributions paid at the employed rate in 2003–04. [161634]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government Actuary's Department estimates that if Class 4 contributions were paid at the Class 1 employee rate of 11 per cent. on profits, between the Lower Profits Limit and the Upper Profits Limit, and 1 per cent. on profits above the Upper Profits Limit, that the increase in National Insurance contribution accruals for the UK in 2003–04 would be

£590 million. This estimate assumes that Class 1 contributions paid by the employer and Class 2 would not be paid.

Paddington Basin Hospital Project

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what response he has received from the promoters of the NHS Paddington Basin project to his request for a new business plan; and if he will make a statement. [161465]

Mr. Boateng: The project team is carrying out a review of the outline business case for the Paddington Health Campus scheme. When this is complete, the outcome of the review will be submitted to the Department of Health.

Parliamentary Questions

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will provide a substantive answer to the questions tabled for written answer by the hon. Member for Perth, reference 157866 to 157868. [161665]

John Healey: I have done so.

Scottish Transport Group

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1481W, on Scottish Transport Group Dissolution Order, what sums in addition to the £50 million reduction in the 2001–02 Scottish Departmental Expenditure limit have been received by the Treasury with respect to the Scottish Transport Group pension fund. [161428]

Mr. Boateng: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which my right hon. Friend the then Chief Secretary to the Treasury gave to her on 11 April 2002, *Official Report*, column 577W, which described the tax treatment in relation to the pension fund.

Secondees

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the secondees from outside organisations working in his Department, stating in each case *(a)* the name of the person, *(b)* the name of the organisation, *(c)* the post held and *(d)* the start and finish dates of the secondment; and which are involved in drafting parliamentary answers. [160602]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* Information relating to secondees is given as follows:

Name	*Organisation*	*Employee job title*	*Date start*	*Expected return date*
Lalitha Colaco-Henry	Financial Service Association	Financial Service Legislation	23 September 2002	22 September 2003
Clare Wilson-Thomas	Christian Action Research and Education	Public Policy Manager	28 November 2001	27 November 2004
Geoffrey Spence	Partnerships UK	PFI Adviser	14 January 2002	13 January 2004
Andy Graham	BP	Team Leader Workforce, Innovation and Reward	8 April 2002	7 April 2004
Liz Corrin	Pannell Kerr Foster	Leading Policy Analyst	22 July 2002	21 July 2004
Victoria Creed	National Audit Office	Accountancy Adviser	6 January 2003	5 January 2005
Paul Lloyd	City of London Police	Fraud Investigation Officer	6 January 2003	5 January 2004
Rowena Weir	Australian Department of Finance	Budget Officer	23 January 2003	22 January 2005
Jeremy Baines	HM Forces	Policy Analyst	6 January 2003	5 January 2006
Kate Bellamy	Womens Budget Group	Policy Analyst Gender	6 March 2003	30 November 2003
Dan Lambeth	Local Government Management Board	Emergency Control Range E	24 February 2003	30 September 2005
Shrupti Shah	Ernst &Young	Leading Policy Analyst	1 April 2003	31 August 2004
Paul Sanderson	Bank of England	Head of Financial Stability Branch	2 June 2003	1 June 2005
Ana Lasaosa	Bank of England	Leading Policy Analyst	23 June 2003	22 November 2003
Hideki Takada	Japan Finance Ministry	Policy Analyst	24 July 2003	23 July 2004
Bhashkaran Naidoo	Health Development Agency	Policy Analyst	1 September 2003	31 March 2004
Charlotte Armstrong	Deloitte Touche	General Business Tax	8 September 2003	8 September 2005
Richard Weaver	Price Waterhouse	Specialist in Accounting Matters	6 October 2003	31 December 2004
Kerrie Quirk	London School of Economics	Senior Personal Assistant	3 November 2003	2 November 2004
Susan Bickham	Partnerships UK	Personal Assistant	3 November 2003	2 November 2004
Hilary Brown	Bank of England	Graham Review of Small Firm Loan Guarantee	21 January 2004	15 October 2004

Treasury staff are routinely involved in drafting parliamentary answers as the occasion demands.

Self-assessment Tax Returns

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on progress with processing self-assessment tax returns. [161382]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue have met their target to process 99 per cent. of returns received by 31 January by 31 March every year since self-assessment was introduced and fully expect to do so again this year.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many self-assessment tax returns due by 31 January have been received by the Inland Revenue; how many are outstanding; and how many remain outstanding in relation to each of the last five tax years. [161383]

Dawn Primarolo: Details of the results for this year will be published with the Budget documentation on 17 March.

The following table gives details for the previous five years of returns still outstanding at the end of February 2004.

Tax year	*Returns still outstanding at end of February 2004*
1997–98	48,392
1998–99	74,313
1999–2000	120,833
2000–01	190,966
2001–02	326,703

South Yorkshire Electorate

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the change in size of electorate for each South Yorkshire parliamentary constituency was between 2001 and 2003. [161336]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from John Pullinger to Mr. Jeff Ennis, dated 16 March 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your question concerning the change in size of parliamentary electorate for each South Yorkshire parliamentary constituency between 2001 and 2003. I am replying in his absence. (161336)

Attached is a table showing the total and percentage change of the number of registered parliamentary electors in South Yorkshire over the period 1 December 2001 to 1 December 2003.

It should be noted that these figures represent the number of registered electors. In many cases, larger decreases may be due to 'cleaning' the registers to ensure that they accurately reflect the electorate, rather than 'real' decreases in the number of electors.

Parliamentary electors on the 2001, 2002 and 2003 electoral registers: South Yorkshire

	Total parliamentary electors as at 1 December:			*Change 2001–03*	*Percentage change 2001–03*
	2001	*2002*	*2003*		
Barnsley Central	60,861	60,588	60,578	-283	-0.5
Barnsley East and Mexborough	66,389	66,821	67,042	653	1.0
Barnsley West and Penistone	66,498	66,988	66,886	388	0.6
Don Valley	67,431	67,537	67,369	-62	-0.1
Doncaster Central	65,902	65,745	65,916	14	0.0
Doncaster North	62,101	61,773	61,886	-215	-0.3
Rother Valley	70,350	69,202	67,682	-2,668	-3.8
Rotherham	58,892	56,955	54,827	-4,065	-6.9
Sheffield Central	60,169	59,979	58,708	-1,461	-2.4
Sheffield, Attercliffe	68,205	67,938	67,382	-823	-1.2
Sheffield, Brightside	53,601	52,781	51,031	-2,570	-4.8
Sheffield, Hallam	59,110	59,274	58,236	-874	-1.5
Sheffield, Heeley	61,374	60,472	59,428	-1,946	-3.2
Sheffield, Hillsborough	74,771	74,820	74,595	-176	-0.2
Wentworth	65,365	64,480	63,104	-2,261	-3.5

Source:
Office for National Statistics.

Suspicious Transaction Reports

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* suspicious transaction reports and *(b)* suspicious activity reports relating to financial matters have been made in each of the last five years; and what proportion of each resulted in (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction in each year. [160200]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

Under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (PoCA) individuals and businesses have various obligations to make disclosures to the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) if they have grounds to believe that money laundering is taking place. These disclosure reports are usually now referred to as "Suspicious Activity Reports", but until recently were known as "Suspicious Transaction Reports".

The number of disclosures made to NCIS in each of the last five years was as follows:

	Number
1999	15,115
2000	18,447
2001	29,976
2002	56,023
2003	94,708

The information provided by disclosures is used by law enforcement agencies in a range of ways to detect crime and trace the proceeds of crime. For example, such information may contribute to an ongoing investigation or be the trigger for a new one, or may be held on the relevant intelligence databases for use in future cases.

Given the variety of ways in which this information is used, it is not possible to link particular disclosures with particular prosecutions and convictions. But the reporting system is a key element of the UK's defences against money laundering. In their 2003 review for the Government of the system, the consultants KPMG examined a sample of disclosures. Of those whose impact could be specifically identified, one-third were found to have contributed to a positive law enforcement outcome such as prosecution, confiscation of criminal proceeds or cash seizure. More recent analysis by NCIS in relation to the impact of one category of disclosures (those where an institution has sought consent to proceed with a transaction) suggests that in the last year £25 million of assets have been seized, restrained or returned to the victim.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions and representations he has had on the *(a)* effectiveness and *(b)* benefit of (i) suspicious transaction and (ii) suspicious activity reports; and what plans he has to change the reporting system. [160201]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

Under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 individuals and businesses have various obligations to make disclosures to the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) if they have grounds to believe that money laundering is taking place. These disclosure reports

are usually now referred to as "Suspicious Activity Reports", but until recently were known as "Suspicious Transaction Reports".

The reporting system is a key element in the United Kingdom's defences against money laundering and an important source of intelligence on all types of acquisitive crime (drugs trafficking, theft, fraud, and all other types of crime committed for financial gain). It is crucial to ensure that the system is effective and that the costs it places on the private sector are proportionate. It was against this background that the Government commissioned the consultants KPMG to examine the reporting system and to make recommendations as to how it could be improved. The Home Office published KPMG's report on 8 July 2003, and set up a Taskforce to support the process of modernising and streamlining the reporting system, as recommended in the report. The Taskforce's membership is drawn from key interested parties in the public and private sectors and the Financial Services Authority.

A major programme to improve the reporting system has been under way in recent months, which has led to substantial improvements in the timeliness and quality of the information NCIS provide to law enforcement agencies. We have received a number of representations from private sector institutions about ways in which the reporting system should be improved. These have been taken into consideration as part of the reform programme.

The success of the reporting system relies heavily on the contribution of reporting institutions. To help build a healthy partnership and to benefit from the input of all those involved in the system we are in regular dialogue with these institutions.

Tax Credits

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many parents have claimed Child Care Credit as part of the Working Families Tax Credit in each year since 1998; and how many are entitled to claim who have not done so. [161014]

Dawn Primarolo: Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) was introduced in October 1999. A time series of the number of families claiming the Child Care Tax Credit as part of WFTC is shown in Table 1.3 of "Working Families Tax Credit Statistics. Quarterly Enquiry. November 2002".

WFTC was replaced by working tax credit (WTC) at April 2003. The number of families benefiting from the child care element of WTC is shown in Table 4.4 of each issue of "Child and Working Tax Credits. Quarterly Statistics". The introduction of WTC has resulted in a large increase in the number of families benefiting from this help with their child care costs.

Overall take-up rates for WFTC for 2000–01 and 2001–02 are shown in "Working Families Tax Credit Estimates of Take-up rates". Separate estimates for families entitled to the child care tax credit are not available.

All the documents referred to appear on the Inland Revenue website, at www/inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm.

TRANSPORT

Aviation Industry

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations the Government has made in the last year to the *(a)* International Civil Aviation Organisation and *(b)* its other member states regarding the possible removal of the exemption of aviation fuel from taxation. [158954]

Mr. McNulty: At a meeting of ICAO's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection in February 2004 the UK supported the use of economic instruments like emissions trading or charging to tackle the climate change impact of aviation. When the matter was raised formally at the ICAO 33rd Assembly in Autumn 2001, the overwhelming majority of states spoke out against the introduction of a tax on aviation fuel. The Government remains committed to finding alternative ways of applying the 'polluter pays' principle to civil aviation. Specific proposals were set out in the Future of Air Transport White Paper published on 16 December 2003.

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects his Department to *(a)* commence and *(b)* complete its review of the security regime tailored for smaller and lighter aircraft and the airports from which they operate. [161978]

Mr. McNulty: We keep our aviation security regime under regular review, consulting with the industry as necessary. Indeed officials are meeting with Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd. and the aircraft operators in Glasgow today. As I said to the hon. Gentleman in my answer to his oral question on 9 March we shall consult the industry fully on proposals for a tailored regime for lighter and smaller aircraft.

Computerised MOT Test

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answers of 8 March 2004, *Official Report,* columns 1237–38W, on computerised MOT test, what assessment his Department has made of the effects of succession planning of this project. [161555]

Mr. Jamieson: In the event of termination, the contract with SBS provides a variety of options for transfer of key elements of the system to VOSA or a new contractor including, outright purchase, lease, replacement or alternative source. In summary these include:

access to system hardware and accommodation;

access to software or other licences and to sub-contracted services;

transfer of staff.

The approach, in the event, will depend whether the affected elements are used solely for MOT Computerisation or whether as a whole, or in part, they are used to provide other services. It will also depend on the extent to which they are critical to computerisation and cannot be obtained elsewhere. Where an item itself cannot be provided, SBS has to provide replacements or appropriate alternatives.

Container Vehicles

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate how many closed container vehicles and trailers, including curtain-sided ones, *(a)* operating from the UK travelled to Europe and *(b)* operating in mainland Europe travelled to the UK in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [160328]

Mr. Jamieson: Information is not available in the form requested. The available information is as follows.

Road goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe: powered goods vehicles (excluding trailers)

Thousand[1]

	UK registered	*Foreign registered*
2001	518	1,174
2002	493	1,290
2003	471	1,322

[1] Number of one-way vehicle trips.

Source:
Roll-on Roll-off goods vehicle survey: DfT.

Carbon Emissions

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the amount of carbon that will be produced by cars in each year up to 2010. [161551]

Mr. Jamieson: We estimate that in 2000, cars in England emitted 15.44 million tonnes of carbon (MtC). We expect emissions to be between 14.85 and 15.64 MtC in 2010. We do not estimate carbon emissions for each year and do not estimate emissions for the UK as a whole.

Cycle Lanes

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of new cycle lanes have been provided using public funds in Crosby since 1997. [160545]

Mr. McNulty: The Department's figures extend back only as far as 1998 and cover the whole of the Sefton metropolitan borough area. Figures are set out in the following table.

Sefton

	Number
1998–99	1
1999–2000	1
2000–01	5
2001–02	5
2002–03 (Forecast outturn)	4
2003–04 (Forecast)	15
Total	31

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of new cycle lanes have been provided in Chorley since 1997. [161534]

Mr. McNulty: The Department does not hold this information for Chorley borough council or for the 1997 financial year. The following table lists cycle lanes in kilometres constructed by Lancashire county council for subsequent years.

Number of cycle lanes in Lancashire county council from 1998–99 to 2002–03

	Cycle lanes (Kilometres)
1998–99	0
1999–2000	0
2000–01	30
2001–02	6
2002–03	1

Lime Street Station

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the latest position on improvements at Lime Street station. [161661]

Mr. McNulty: Network Rail is working with Mersey Travel and Liverpool Vision on plans to develop the station. However, since it took over responsibility for the station on 16 November 2003, Network Rail has made several improvements already, and is looking to make a number of others: these include refurbishment of the toilet facilities, improved security, including plans for a new CCTV system, and improvements to passenger announcement equipment and signage.

Railways

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much Government grant is being allocated to improve *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Adlington railway stations. [161532]

Mr. McNulty: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 3 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 922W, about Chorley. There are currently no grant payments being made for improvements at Adlington station.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what Government grants are available to fund *(a)* a footbridge and *(b)* an underpass on railway line crossing Adlington. [161535]

Mr. McNulty: There are no Government grants available to fund a footbridge and an underpass in Adlington. However, Local Transport Plan funding may be appropriate for these proposals. The local transport authority is Lancashire county council who should be approached in the first instance with these proposals.

Road Safety

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many motorcyclists were *(a)* killed and *(b)* seriously injured where (i) no other vehicle was involved, (ii) the motorcyclist was on a bend in the road when the accident happened and (iii) the motorcyclist was categorised as inexperienced in 2002–03; and if he will make a statement. [159469]

Mr. Jamieson: In accidents during 2002 where (i) no other vehicle was involved, 167 motorcyclists were killed and 1,614 were seriously injured, and (ii) in accidents where the motorcyclist was on the bend of a road when the accident happened, 230 motorcyclists were killed and 1,374 were seriously injured.

The information regarding driver/rider inexperience is not available as routine accident reports do not currently record contributory factors to accidents. But under a pilot scheme, the incidence of rider inexperience was recorded as a contributory factor in about 5 per cent. of injury accidents in 2002 where the factor which precipitated the accident was attributed to the motorcyclist.

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in how many road traffic accidents drug taking was a contributory factor in the accident in each year since 1997. [159035]

Mr. Jamieson: The information is not available as routine accident reports do not currently record contributory factors to accidents. But under a pilot scheme, information on contributory factors to road accidents has been collected by 15 police forces. The influence of drugs was recorded as a contributory factor in about 1 per cent. of injury accidents recorded under this pilot scheme in both 2001 and 2002.

Taxis

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the effect of abolishing the quantity regulation of taxi numbers on *(a)* the safety of the general public, *(b)* access to safe and convenient transport for disabled people, *(c)* the quality of service received by the public, *(d)* access to convenient transport for people on low incomes and *(e)* the earning power of taxi drivers. [161363]

Mr. McNulty: The Government have been considering the Office of Fair Trading's report on the UK taxi market and the representations received about it. The Government intend to respond to the OFT report shortly.

Thames Bridges

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on the installation of grab chains on the buttresses of Thames bridges in central London; what consideration he has given to *(a)* this and *(b)* other safety measures; which body is responsible for authorising such provision; and which body is responsible for installation of safety measures on bridges. [161526]

Mr. Jamieson: I have not received any recent representations on the matter of grab chains on the buttresses of bridges in central London.

However the London Coastguard officers liaise with the relevant local authorities and riparian landowners giving advice on the provision of safety equipment along the Thames.

Transport Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the outcome was of the Transport Council held in Brussels on 9 March; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [161442]

Mr. Darling: The transport session of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council met in Brussels on 9 March. I represented the UK.

The Council was unable to reach a General Approach on the proposed amendment to Directive 1999/62/EC on the charging of lorries for the use of certain roads (the 'Eurovignette' Directive). The Presidency tabled a compromise package in an attempt to reach agreement. Following some debate, there was a general willingness to accept most aspects of the compromise. However, the Commissioner insisted that compulsory hypothecation of toll revenues be part of the package. While some Ministers supported this, the UK was among a majority of member states which opposed it. The Presidency concluded that the Council would have to return to the subject at a future date.

The Commission presented a third rail package, comprising proposals on: liberalisation of international passenger transport; train driver licensing and crew certification; passenger rights for international services; and minimum standards for freight transport. These proposals will now be considered in detail, with a view to agreement at a later Council.

The Commission gave a progress report on air transport negotiations with the US, which aim to achieve a Transatlantic Open Aviation Area (OAA). The Presidency invited comments from Ministers, which would provide guidance for the next stage. In the Commission's view, the present US offer was inadequate and balanced in the US's favour. Nevertheless, the Commission believed that it would be appropriate to try to reach a partial agreement by the end of the year, accompanied by a strong commitment by the US to negotiate a further stage. I agreed that the present offer was unbalanced and argued that if it were agreed there would be no incentive for the US to engage in further negotiations. It would also set a bad precedent for the EU's aviation relations with other third countries. A genuine OAA offered enormous opportunities for both EU and US airlines and should be pursued with determination. Most member states agreed that the current offer was not balanced and that the Commission should continue negotiating for a better outcome. The Presidency concluded that COREPER and the Special Committee should monitor developments in the next round of negotiations.

The Commission reported further on external relations in aviation. Discussions continued with Romania and Bulgaria on entry into the European Common Aviation Area, and would be extended to the Western Balkans. Contacts with other neighbouring countries were being undertaken. The Commission was talking to Australia, New Zealand and Singapore under its restricted horizontal mandate for negotiations with third countries, and other countries would follow. The Council took note, and referred the issue to COREPER and working groups for consideration.

The Commission reported on the agreement reached with the US on cooperation in satellite navigation systems, key elements being compatibility and interoperability between GPS and Galileo. Council Conclusions on Galileo were adopted, welcoming progress, and looking forward to expected decisions by the end of the year on the deployment and operational phases of the project.

Under AOB, there were a number of maritime items. France presented its two sea motorway projects. The Commission indicated its support for sea motorway schemes to facilitate links between ports. Belgium underlined the significance of the recent agreement in the IMO of a Convention on ballast water. The Commission noted that the Convention was a major step forward, and said it would push for member states to ratify it as soon as possible. Spain raised its concerns over the 6-month indicative ratification for the Protocol to the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (IOPC). Spain also noted that not all member states had yet transposed Vessel Traffic monitoring Directive 2002/59/EC, and that the lack of a uniform approach endangered maritime safety. Spain further insisted that a common approach was needed towards parties responsible for oil pollution, including owners.

The Commission reported on digital tachographs. The deadline for installation to relevant vehicles is August this year. As it is accepted that this cannot be met, a co-decision proposal for revision of the date is needed. In the interim, the Commission will be issuing a letter confirming that a moratorium of between eight and 12 months would be granted.

Also under AOB, the Commission reported on the revised Commission proposal on harmonised operational safety standards and administrative procedures in civil aviation. The Presidency concluded that work would start at the technical level with a report expected at the next Transport Council.

No votes were taken at this Council.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Big Ben

35. **Norman Baker**: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, if he will make a statement on the maintenance of the great Westminster clock, popularly known as Big Ben. [161276]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: 'Big Ben' is actually the nickname of the hour bell rather than the Great Clock itself. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week clockmakers attend the Clock to inspect it and wind it, and to check the time adjustment. Twice a year the fly fans, brakes and the associated bearings are disassembled and inspected. Metallurgists test the mechanical parts annually.

In addition, a specialist clockmaker is preparing a plan for clock maintenance over the next three years.

Line of Route Tours

39. **Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what plans he has to improve the availability of tours of the House by constituents. [161280]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: A detailed report on the first year of operations since the introduction of the Central Tours Office and the new sitting hours in January last year is being considered by the Administration Committee this week. The Committee will consider the report and then advise the Commission.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Energy Supplies

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to increase the target of energy generated from renewable sources. [161004]

Mr. Timms: The Government remain firmly committed to the 10 per cent. target of electricity from renewable sources by 2010 and an aspiration to double this by 2020. We plan to review the Renewables Obligation (which is the main vehicle for achieving our target) during 2005, and to set out the scope of that review later this year. In December I announced that the Renewables Obligation will be extended from 2010 to a level of 15.4 per cent. in 2015–16.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent estimates she has made of the change in demand for electricity over the next decade. [161813]

Mr. Timms: In August 2003 the Department published for consultation new projections to 2010 of electricity generation from different sources. These are available at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/projections.pdf.

Work to update these projections is continuing and revised projections should be available shortly.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the change in demand for electricity over the past decade was in *(a)* the North West and *(b)* the United Kingdom. [161817]

Mr. Timms: Data for electricity demand in the UK are contained in the long term trends annex to the Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics 2003 (table 5.1.2) available at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/inform/energy_stats/electricity/index.shtml.

Data for the North West region were published for the period 2000–02 only in the December 2003 issue of Energy Trends available at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/inform/energy_trends/2003/dec_03.pdf.

EU Social Chapter (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the benefits of the EU Social Chapter for the residents of Crosby. [160522]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The residents of Crosby have benefited from the EU Social Chapter by having their employment rights extended to include:

the right to Parental Leave which gives parents the right to 13 weeks unpaid leave at the birth or adoption of a child;

the entitlement of part-time workers to the same pro-rata terms and conditions of employment as full time workers, thereby removing any discrimination and improving the quality of part-time jobs;

the provision that once a prima facie case has been made in an employment tribunal claim, the burden of proof is placed on the defendant (usually the employer), who will need to demonstrate that sex discrimination has not occurred;

rights under the Fixed Term Work Directive that provide equal treatment and prevent abuse of fixed term contracts;

rights under the European Works Council Directive which requires companies with at least 1,000 employees in total and at least 150 workers in each of the two member states, to establish structures for consulting workers on issues that affect them and;

in addition, the Information and Consultation of Employees Directive to be implemented in the UK by March 2005, establishes a right to new minimum standards for workforce communication and involvement in large firms.

Flexible Working

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of requests for flexible working following the birth of a child that were received in the six months following the April 2003 implementation of the flexible working legislation; and what proportion of these requests were granted. [161460]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government have commissioned questions in the monthly Office for National Statistics Omnibus Survey to help make an assessment of the number of flexible working requests in the first year of the new flexible working law coming into effect. The results should be published shortly.

Last October the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and Lovells published the results of a survey looking at the impact of the new law in its first six months and reported:

Over a quarter (28 per cent.) of employers have seen an increase in the total number of requests for flexible working since the right was introduced in April 2003.

Of those organisations that have received statutory requests since then, nearly two-thirds (62 per cent.) have approved at least half of all such requests, either in the form submitted by the employee or in modified form.

A large majority of employers say they generally have little difficulty with the new right—76 per cent. say that the impact of the legislation on their organisation has been negligible and 90 per cent. report no significant problems complying with the new requirements.

Answers to common questions put to advisers on the ACAS helpline during the first six months of the law being into effect are available on the DTI's website at www.dti.gov.uk/er/flexible.htm.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to extend the right to request flexible working to carers of elderly and disabled people. [161466]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The right to request flexible working and duty on employers to consider such requests seriously is already wider in scope for parents of disabled children, who can make a request up to their child's 18th birthday. For other parents, the right applies while their children are under six.

The Government are committed to commencing a review of the law in 2006. Issues such as whether it is appropriate to extend its scope, and to whom, could be considered at this time.

The Government's Work-Life Balance Campaign seeks to persuade employers of the benefits of adopting work-life balance policies and to offer these opportunities to all employees to help meet caring responsibilities, as well as pursue personal interests, wherever it makes business sense.

Insulation Costs

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average cost of installing *(a)* photovoltaic cells and *(b)* external wall insulation on a house was in the last year for which figures are available; and what public subsidies are available for this work. [160098]

Mr. Timms: PV average cost based on a three-bed semi detached household system of 2kWp capacity.

Depending on the type of system specified, total average costs for a 2kWp system are between £13,000 and £17,000. Under the Major Photovoltaic Demonstration Programme 50 per cent. is available in grant.

External wall insulation costs:

The marginal cost for externally insulating a three-bed semi detached house is approx 1500. The costs vary greatly according to house type and building height. Public subsidies are not available for this technology.

British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions her Department has had about BNFL liabilities in the USA; and if she will make a statement. [161122]

Mr. Timms: The Department has had many discussions with BNFL about its' business in the USA. These discussions have broadly been about BNFL seeking routes to significantly reduce its exposure to the US clean-up market. In relation to Westinghouse we have had discussions with BNFL about the steps that need to be taken to enable the business to operate with greater financial independence, so that possibilities for private sector participation are opened up. I have recently spoken to Spencer Abraham, US Energy Secretary, on these issues.

Paid Leave (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many residents of Crosby qualify for paid leave entitlements. [160539]

Mr. Sutcliffe: All workers resident in Crosby qualify for paid annual leave entitlements—at least four weeks as set out in the Working Time Regulations. While all women are entitled to 26 weeks ordinary maternity leave, only those who meet the eligibility criteria will be to claim statutory maternity pay for that period.

All employees in Crosby who are eligible will be entitled to take statutory paternity leave with pay and statutory adoption leave with pay.

Recruitment

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost of recruitment of civil servants for the Department was in each financial year since 1996–97, broken down by *(a)* delegated or contracted out recruitment procedures and *(b)* recruitment procedures carried out by the Department. [158174]

Ms Hewitt: The Department has information on the total costs of recruiting civil servants, but it is not possible to provide a breakdown as required without occurring disproportionate cost. The figures are as follows:

	£000
1998–99	433
1999–2000	944
2000–01	655
2001–02	229
2002–03	662

Shredded Tyres

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements she is making to ensure that shredded tyres going to landfill are usable in shredded form for other purposes once they are no longer permitted to be placed in landfill sites. [161782]

Mr. Timms: There are a range of applications for used tyres in both whole and shredded form, including engineering uses, incorporation into sports and safety surfaces and energy recovery in cement kilns. The number of tyres being put to such use is growing strongly as the industry anticipates the July 2006 ban on their disposal to landfill. There is legislation in place covering the handling and movement of used tyres, as with other wastes, but the Government are currently considering whether this existing framework needs to be strengthened in any way while the adjustment away from landfill disposal takes place. We continue to discuss these issues with the tyre industry and other interested parties.

Worker Registration Certificates

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether a worker's registration certificate guarantees its holder protection under minimum wage legislation. [156936]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We have announced that individuals from the accession states will be entitled to work in the UK provided they meet certain conditions. These will include registering with the Home Office under its workers' registration scheme, which was announced on 23 February.

Most of these individuals will then be entitled to the national minimum wage, although it is possible that some may fall within exemption categories in the minimum wage legislation or instead be covered by the agricultural minimum wage. We will ensure that there is effective enforcement in this area.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Child Abuse

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the findings of the survey from the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency on the proportion of primary school children who regularly chat over computer software and admit that they have had face-to-face meetings with people they met on-line. [158989]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I have been asked to reply.

The evaluation report, "Emerging Trends Amongst Primary School Children's Use of The Internet" was published by the Cyberspace Research Unit (CRU) of the University of Central Lancashire, under contract to the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta). The evaluation was commissioned to evaluate the Internet Proficiency Scheme which was designed to help Key Stage 2 pupils learn how to use the internet and other technologies safely and responsibly.

The CRU evaluation found that the number of children aged 8 to 11 years using chatrooms was decreasing. When questioned by researchers in 2002, two in 10 children of a group of 1,331 admitted to using chatrooms on more than one occasion. In 2003, the figure dropped to one in ten, when 330 children were asked the same question. Also in 2002, two out of a group of 100 children admitted to attending face-to-face meetings with people that they had met online. This number increased to three out of a group of 100 children in the same age range in 2003.

The evaluation suggests that over 90 per cent. of primary schools did not let their students use internet chat facilities on their premises and that all schools had taken some action to keep children using the internet safe. This included using technology, such as content filtering software, and creating clear written policies that outline how children should use the internet at school.

There was also evidence from the evaluation that schools were the most commonly reported sources of internet safety advice and that there had been an increase in the proportion of children that were aware of general internet safety guidelines.

Community Sentences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many cases in the last 12 months for which figures are available magistrates have been unable to issue community sentences as a result of not being in possession of pre-sentencing reports; and what sentencing options are not available where there is no pre-sentencing report. [158635]

Paul Goggins: Information is not collected centrally on the number of requests for pre-sentence reports made by magistrates which are not met. Non-production of reports does not prevent the court from issuing a community sentence or any other sentence. It is for

sentencers to decide if they wish to request a pre-sentence report, if the court is of the opinion that it is unnecessary to obtain a pre-sentence report it need not do so.

Credit References

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether police forces may have access to the credit reference agency database *(a)* with and *(b)* without the knowledge of the individual concerned. [160454]

Caroline Flint: The principal means by which police forces access the information held by credit reference agencies is through making a request under section 29 of the Data Protection Act 1998. The Act allows data to be accessed without the knowledge of the individuals concerned where this is

"for the purpose of the prevention or detection of crime, the apprehension or prosecution of offenders, or the assessment or collection of any tax or duty or of any imposition of a similar nature"

, and where a failure to disclose this information would be likely to prejudice any of these matters. Use of this power is limited by a number of safeguards, notably that applications are approved by senior officers and the reasons for the application documented. The Information Commissioner also monitors the use by law enforcement of these databases.

Crime Reduction

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish all the responses his Department receives to Reducing Crime-Changing Lives. [147434]

Paul Goggins: Responses to the "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" document will be made available to anyone who asks for them. Where respondents have sought confidentiality this will be respected.

Criminal Assets

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 899W, on criminal assets, in how many of the 1,219 cases cited an order made was under section 295(2) of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2003 to extend the period for which the seized cash was detained. [160195]

Caroline Flint: An order was made under section 295(2) of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 in 1,218 cases, to extend the period for which the seized cash was detained.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 899W, on criminal assets (1) what quantity of cash seized during this period was paid into a bank account under the terms of section 296 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2003, broken down by relevant bank and building society; [160196]

(2) what proportion of cash seized has subsequently been released; [160197]

(3) in how many of the 1,219 cases cited compensation has been paid *(a)* for loss of interest which would have been earned and *(b)* for additional loss under section 302(4) of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2003. [160198]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total value of assets recovered by the Assets Recovery Agency is since its establishment. [160067]

Caroline Flint: Since the agency became operational on 24 February 2003, the total value of assets under its investigation is over £50 million of which over £13.5 million is currently frozen under court orders, pending hearings for recovery orders. In addition, four tax assessments have been issued under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 with a total value of £728,000. Tax receipts with a total value of £2,000 have so far been recovered. The agency has also provided assistance to law enforcement agencies in 19 confiscation order cases in which assets with a total value of £4.4 million have been restrained.

Drugs Testing and Treatment

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the procedure is for applying for a drugs testing and treatment order; and what the maximum distance is that a person subject to a drugs testing and treatment order is expected to travel in order to comply with such an order. [156871]

Paul Goggins: Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) can be made by magistrates courts and the Crown court where the court is satisfied that an offender aged 16 or over is dependent on or has a propensity to misuse drugs, and requires and may be susceptible to treatment. A court shall not make a DTTO unless it is satisfied that arrangements have been or can be made for the treatment intended to be specified in the order, and the offender expresses his willingness to comply with its requirements. To determine an offender's suitability for the order, the Probation Service will carry out an assessment in conjunction with treatment services, usually during an adjournment for a Pre Sentence Report.

There is no maximum distance within which offenders are expected to travel to comply with a DTTO. Arrangements for supervision by the Probation Service and treatment provision are made as practicably as possible, taking into account not only the distance offenders have to travel (often on a daily basis) but the complexity of the transportation system and the availability of any specific treatment needed.

Football

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) who makes the decision to impose a football banning order on an individual under the Football Spectators Act 1989, as amended by the Football (Disorder) Act 2000; [160507]

(2) whether he has advised the Football Association that the provisions of the Football Spectators Act 1989, as amended by the Football (Disorder) Act 2000, apply to players and officials as well as to football supporters; [160508]

(3) how many *(a)* football players and *(b)* officials have been subject to a football banning order under the Football Spectators Act 1989, as amended by the Football (Disorder) Act 2000. [160509]

Ms Blears: In accordance with the provisions of Football Spectators Act 1989 (as amended by the Football (Disorder) Act 2000), it is for the court to determine whether or not to impose a football banning order following a conviction of a football-related offence or a complaint laid by the police. The football authorities are aware of the relevant legislation. No senior player or official has been subject to a football banning order. The imposition of such an order would be a matter for the courts.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultations his Department has held with the Department for Education and Skills on future production of education materials for Holocaust Memorial Day. [160643]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* Officials from the Departments have a close working relationship around all aspects of Holocaust Memorial Day and have discussed the future production of educational materials.

The Department for Education and Skills will be producing education resources in support of Holocaust Memorial Day 2005. Both the Home Office and the Department for Education and Skills will continue to support fully the aims and objectives of Holocaust Memorial Day.

Identity Cards

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what estimate he has made of the cost of providing *(a)* mobile and *(b)* fixed local reader systems for national identity cards; [160452]

(2) if he will make a statement on the trials which have been conducted into mobile devices to check biometrics. [160455]

Beverley Hughes: The cost assumptions and cost estimates which have been used in the preparation of the Home Office's business case have not been placed in the public domain for reasons of commercial confidentiality. These estimates are based on extensive research and consultation with stakeholders both within and outside Government, and will be the subject of further refinement as the programme progresses.

Biometric checks known as quick checks are used to search an individual's fingerprint against the Immigration Asylum Fingerprint System (IAFS) in order to identify if that individual is known to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND). Quick checks searches can be conducted by immigration officers anywhere and a result known within three minutes.

There are around 300 quick checks facilities within the Immigration Service including local enforcement offices around the country. Approximately 20 quick checks facilities have been placed in police stations to check identities of suspects if the Police think IND may have an interest in them.

Quick checks have also been used in a pilot visa application process in Sri Lanka, which is now being repeated in several east African countries in order to collect fingerprints of individuals requesting visas. These data are held on IAFS.

Some police forces use readers to check fingerprints in joint working with the Immigration Service. Finger print readers will also be used by Northamptonshire police in a pilot later this year involving automated number plate recognition. When there is some reason to stop a particular vehicle the fingerprints of the driver, and passengers, can be taken and checked.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long it will take to register an individual for a national identity card. [159757]

Beverley Hughes: The Home Office is working on designing a process which enables an individual to be registered in a convenient and timely manner. However, it is too early at present to specify the exact registration times that will be taken. Projects such as the UK Passport Service biometric trial will help to inform the estimates of the registration time.

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of how DNA information might be used alongside other biometric data when identity cards are introduced. [161223]

Beverley Hughes: DNA has well-known applications in identification of people in a law enforcement context and is both universal and able to discriminate among a very large number of individuals. However, the requirements of an identity card scheme are for high-volume, real-time identity verification and so DNA would be unsuitable because of the specialist expertise and length of time needed in taking and analysing samples.

Internet Child Pornography

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of whether a hard drive amnesty should be introduced for people who have child pornography downloaded on their systems, in return for a caution and agreement that they undertake a course of treatment. [159482]

Paul Goggins: We have no plans to take forward such an amnesty.

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued to the *(a)* police and *(b)* Crown Prosecution Service on the investigation of individuals suspected of (i) making and (ii) possessing illegal images of children. [159483]

Paul Goggins: The criminal offences relating to taking, making distributing and possessing indecent photographs of children are contained in the Protection of Children Act 1978, as amended, and no central guidance has been issued.

However, section 46 of the sexual Offences Act 2003 provides a defence to a charge of "making" indecent photographs of children under section 1 of the 1978 Act, and we are working with representatives of the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Crown Prosecution Service on a Memorandum of Understanding concerning its interpretation. This will provide guidance to those working in the field on the issues that need to be considered in determining whether acts of "making" fall within the scope of the defence. We have consulted bodies representing internet service providers and other interested parties on the content of the document. It is intended that the final document will be published on the Crown Prosecution Service website when the Sexual Offences Act comes into force.

Judicial Responsibility

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the extent of his responsibility for *(a)* magistrates and *(b)* district judges. [159298]

Paul Goggins: Responsibility for magistrates and district judges rests with the Department for Constitutional Affairs. The Home Office has certain responsibilities in relation to magistrates courts, including the legislation governing the procedures and sentencing powers of those courts.

Justice and Home Affairs Council

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many meetings of the Justice and Home Affairs Council he has attended since being appointed Secretary of State for the Home Department. [156487]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* Eight.

Police Officers (Early Retirement)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers have retired early owing to ill-health in each year since 1997. [151416]

Ms Blears *[pursuant to her reply, 28 January 2004, Official Report, c. 444W]:* The information that was given in the answer was not accurate due to an administrative error; the correct version of the answer is as follows: The requested figures, including the figure for 2002–03 published by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary last year, are given in the table.

	Medical Retirements
1996–97	2,012
1997–98	1,811
1998–99	1,642
1990–2000	1,232
2000–01	1,209
2001–02	1,114
2002–03	821

Prisoners

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the average proportion of prisoners who were *(a)* illiterate and *(b)* innumerate on (i) entering and (ii) leaving prison was in each year since 1997; [158733]

(2) what the average proportion of young offenders who were *(a)* illiterate and *(b)* innumerate on (i) entering and (ii) leaving young offenders institutions was in each year since 1997. [158735]

Paul Goggins: The following table shows the proportion of young offenders and other prisoners assessed on reception into prison as having literacy and numeracy skills at or below level 1.

	Percentage at or below level 1	
	Literacy	*Numeracy*
2002–03		
Young offenders	81.7	78.1
Prisoners[1]	69.9	70.7
2001–02		
Young offenders	78.1	72.9
Prisoners[1]	73.9	67.2
2000–01		
Young offenders	72.7	75.0
Prisoners	61.6	65.5
1999–2000		
Young offenders	72.0	80.8
Prisoners	74.3	64.0
1998–99		
Young offenders	70.0	77.6
Prisoners	68.5	66.4
1997–98		
Young offenders	68.5	82.4
Prisoners	55.9	66.8

The Prison Service does not currently have systems for tracking individual prisoner progress. The following table sets out prisoner achievement against our literacy and numeracy targets since 2000–01.

	Target	*Achievement*
2000–01	14,500 (level 2)	12,500 (86%)
2001–02	18,000 (level 2)	16,000
2002–03	28,800 (all levels)	41,518 (144%)
Of which:		
	6,000 (entry)	9,120
	12,000 (level 1)	17,208
	10,800 (level 2)	15,190
2003–04[1]	36,676 (all levels)	38,464 (105%)
Of which:		
	8,117 (entry)	11,223
	14,501 (level 1)	15,694
	14,058 (level 2)	11,547
2004–05	60,000 (all levels)	

[1] To January 2004.

Probation Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there has been an evaluation of the effectiveness of the reorganisation of the Probation Service in April 2001. [159814]

Paul Goggins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1285W.

Sentencing Powers

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Court of Appeal has powers to reduce a sentence if the sentence is not considered to be wrong in principle. [156313]

Paul Goggins: Sections 9(1) and 11(3) of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968 grant the Court of Appeal a very wide discretion to deal with appeals against sentence as it thinks fit, subject only to the proviso that it must not increase the sentence imposed by the Crown court. However, the criminal division of the Court of Appeal is generally bound by its own precedents. When considering an appeal against sentence on the ground that the sentence is manifestly excessive or wrong in principle, the Court of Appeal has traditionally made it clear that it will not interfere with the Crown court's sentence if that sentence is right in principle (i.e. within the general reach of the Crown court's discretion and not manifestly excessive). The interpretation of legislation is, however, a matter for the courts.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Legislative Process

38. **Hugh Bayley**: To ask the Leader of the House, how the Government decides into which House to introduce a Bill. [161279]

Mr. Woolas: When deciding into which House to introduce a Bill, the Government considers a range of factors, including the nature of the Bill and the need to maintain a balanced programme in both Houses throughout the Session.

Pre-legislative Scrutiny

Mr. Allen: To ask the Leader of the House, what recent steps he has taken to promote the use of pre-legislative scrutiny on-line for all proposals for legislation; and if he will make a statement. [161277]

Mr. Hain: Whether to consult on-line—as part of pre-legislative scrutiny or another form of inquiry—is a matter for decision by the individual committee concerned. The Modernisation Committee, which I chair, is currently conducting an on-line consultation as part of our inquiry into connecting Parliament with the public. I commend this approach to other Committees.

Sitting Hours

Mr. Burns: To ask the Leader of the House, what studies he has conducted on the impact of the changes in the working hours of the House on the efficiency of the work of the House. [161278]

Mr. Hain: I wrote to all Members in January asking for views on the sitting hours, including the impact of the change on the efficiency of the work of the House. Such factors will form part of the forthcoming review by the Modernisation Committee.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Cinema-goers

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her Department's policy is on improving facilities for cinema-goers with impaired *(a)* hearing and *(b)* sight; and what funding has been made available to improve services. [160814]

Estelle Morris: The UK Film Council announced on 15 September 2003 the launch of a Cinema Access Programme to improve access to cinemas by people with hearing and sight impairments. £500,000 of lottery money has been allocated to this programme, of which £350,000 is being used to supply up to 75 local cinemas across England with subtitling and audio-description equipment; £60,000 is funding the provision of sub-titled and audio-described film prints for use in cinemas; £50,000 is funding the development of a website providing information on when and where subtitled or audio-described films will be seen; and £40,000 is supporting research and development into a personal captioning device to work alongside existing digital systems.

Gambling

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much public funding has been spent by the Government on *(a)* publicising the dangers of gambling among under 18-year-olds and *(b)* rehabilitation for gambling addicts in each year since 1997. [161340]

Mr. Caborn: There is no public funding for *(a)* It is not possible to provide a specific estimate of the amount spent on *(b)* within total NHS provision for mental health services, bearing in mind the frequent co-morbidity of pathological gambling with other forms or manifestations of mental disorder.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what research her Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated into the likely effects on repeat play by children of reducing the legal maximum stake for redemption-style gaming machines from 30 pence to 10 pence per game; [161303]

(2) what research has been carried out on behalf of her Department on the extent to which *(a)* redemption style machines offering exchangeable goods and *(b)* other category D machines affect the likelihood of repetitive play among children. [161341]

Mr. Caborn: The report of the Gambling Review Body (CM 5206) identifies a number of research studies dealing with gaming machine play by children. These include machines which would be classified as Category D machines under the draft Gambling Bill proposals.

But the Department is not aware of any studies which relate specifically to redemption style machines, and has not commissioned any.

Libraries (Digitisation)

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money has been spent on the digitisation of content in libraries in Buckingham since 1997. [161322]

Estelle Morris: The information requested is not held centrally. However, Buckinghamshire county council is a partner in the Thames Pilot Project, which received £328,000 from the New Opportunities Fund to help establish a website depicting the history of the River Thames and the communities which lie along its length. Separately, in 2003 Buckinghamshire digitised over 500 images of Victorian prisoners held at Aylesbury Gaol to be displayed on the council website at a cost of approximately £2,000. This was in addition to the previous digitisation of over 23,000 historic images of Buckinghamshire in 1994, of which 425 relate directly to Buckingham.

Museums/Libraries (Funding)

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what written representations she has *(a)* requested and *(b)* received regarding local authority financial support for (i) museums, (ii) libraries and (iii) archives in the forthcoming financial year under the local authority financial settlement; and if she will make a statement. [158463]

Estelle Morris: The information requested is as follows.

(a) To date, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has not requested any written representations regarding local authority financial support for museums, libraries or archives in the forthcoming financial year under the local authority financial settlement.

(b) To date, the Department has received:

i. Three written representations regarding local authority financial support for museums, relating to Worthing borough council, Eastbourne borough council and Daventry district council.

ii. Three written representations about potential service reductions in library services from London borough of Barnet, Cambridgeshire county council and Telford and Wrekin borough council following the announcement of the local authority financial settlement for the forthcoming financial year. The Department has received no other written representations regarding local authority financial support in relation to libraries.

iii. One written representation regarding local authority financial support for archives, relating to Essex county council.

National Lottery

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost of administering the National Lottery as a proportion of each ticket sold was in 2003–04. [161437]

Estelle Morris: Information for 2003–04 is not yet available. In 2002–03 the operator of the National Lottery retained 6.3 per cent.

Television Licence

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of television licence fee defaulters fell into each socio-economic category in the last year for which figures are available. [160685]

Estelle Morris: The table shows how, according to figures obtained from the BBC, evasion is spread across all socio-economic groups.

Percentage

Group	*UK Population Distribution by socio-economic group of chief income earner, according to National Readership Survey between July 2000 and June 2001*	*TV Licence Evaders Distribution of socio-economic group of 1,108,787 who have evaded for up to two years*
2003		
AB	23.7	23.4
C1	27.7	27.2
C2	20.9	19.8
DE	27.7	29.6
2002		
AB	23.8	22.4
C1	27.3	26.6
C2	21.2	20.3
DE	27.7	30.7

Sports (Participation)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people *(a)* over and *(b)* under the age of 16 take part in sporting activity in (i) the north west, (ii) Lancashire and (iii) Chorley. [161445]

Mr. Caborn: The Health Survey for England 1998 indicated that 14.0 per cent. of people aged 16 and over in the north west participated in sport and walking for a minimum of 30 minutes at least five times a week and that 21.4 per cent. did so at least three times a week. Disaggregated information for Lancashire and Chorley is not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The information requested on people under the age of 16 is not held in the format requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Data on the number of pupils who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high-quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum are now being collected for the first time and will be published in April.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the impact of Common Agricultural Policy export subsidies on poverty in developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [160590]

Hilary Benn: The Government acknowledge the damaging impact that export subsidies have on the poor in developing countries by depressing world market prices and distorting trade. Evidence suggests that with elimination of all agricultural export subsidies from the expected levels in 2005, it is estimated that annual global incomes would be US$3.6 billion a year higher by 2010, than if expected levels of export subsidies persisted and there were no further reforms.

It is for this reason we have pressed for reductions in the use of export subsidies in Europe. We fully support the commitment made at the Doha ministerial meeting in 2001, which agreed that agriculture negotiations would aim to achieve: substantial improvements in market access; reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies; and substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support.

However, export subsidies cannot be tackled in isolation, as they are a consequence of high internal support prices and restricted access to the EU market for developing country exporters. While the Common Agricultural Policy reforms agreed in June last year don't deal explicitly with export subsidies, they will result in the de-linking of domestic support from production and this is expected to lead to real changes in output, by gradually reducing the incentives for EU farmers to over-produce. This in turn will reduce the need to dispose of surpluses onto the world market through the use of export subsidies. The reforms that have been made to the CAP mean that the EU is now able to reduce its export subsidies to about 25 per cent. of the level that was paid 10 years ago.

EU Aid

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what the explanation is for the €72.73 million excess of payment over funds committed in respect of Mediterranean projects that were financed from the Commission Budget in 2002; [161118]

(2) what the destination was of the difference between the €574.87 million committed and the €454.25 million euros paid on Asia projects that were financed from the General Commission Budget in 2002; [161112]

(3) what the destination was of the difference between the €520.32 million committed and the €474.25 million paid on Humanitarian Aid projects that were financed from the General Commission Budget in 2002; [161113]

(4) what the destination was of the €430.69 million difference between the funds committed and funds paid to the pre-accession from the General Commission Budget in 2002; [161107]

(5) what the destination was of the difference between the €333.22 million committed and the €181.79 million paid on Latin American projects that were financed from the General Commission Budget in 2002; [161115]

(6) what the destination was of the €710.65 million difference between funds committed and funds paid to the pre-accession-ISPA project that was financed from the General Commission Budget in 2002; [161109]

(7) what the destination was of the difference between the 505.96 million euros committed and the €417.31 million paid on Food Aid projects that were financed from the General Commission Budget in 2002; [161110]

(8) what the destination was of the €581.48 million difference between funds committed and funds paid to the pre-accession-PHARE project that was financed from the General Commission Budget in 2002; [161108]

(9) what the destination was of the difference between the €147.95 million committed and the €18.87 million paid on the pre-accession projects for Malta, Cyprus and Turkey that were financed from the General Commission Budget in 2002; [161111]

(10) what the destination was of the difference between the €124.18 million committed and the €119.26 million paid on South African projects that were financed from the General Commission Budget in 2002. [161105]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The European Commission budget is approved annually. This approval process sets two distinct budget figures. The first is for commitments adopted and reflects the total value of all operations which the Commission expects to be approved over the financial year. The payments budget line on the other hand represents the aggregated spending forecast for the year, based on various approvals from previous years. There is therefore no one single identifiable country or thematic destination for the sum to which the questions refer.

There is no direct causal or operational linkage between the commitments and payments appropriations figures in external action or pre-accession budget lines. Individual projects or programmes may span several years from the date of commitment, stretching the spending horizon accordingly. In addition the actual rate of forecasted spend can be affected by project or programme-specific or wider external factors.

EU Development Finance

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will break down by main category the €104.25 million classified as unallocated/unspecified in the financial tables on page 256 of the Annual Report 2003 from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the EC Development Policy and the Implementation of External Assistance in 2002. [160717]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The information requested is not available. Unallocated/unspecified ODA refers to expenditure that cannot easily be placed within a sector. This may be because a project covers a number of sectors and cannot easily be divided up between them or because expenditure does not fit within any sectoral definition.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will break down by main category the 141.86 million euros of administrative costs of donors in the EU's Official Development Assistance in 2002, as referred to in the financial tables on page 256 of the Annual Report 2003 from the European

Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the EC Development Policy and the Implementation of External Assistance in 2002. [160718]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The information requested is not available. Each year the Commission publishes details of its expenditure along with plans for the current year in the Official Journal in February. This includes details of "Expenditure on administrative management" for the budget lines along with the way in which the commission organises its expenditure. The commission does not routinely publish administrative expenditure by sector.

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) how many *(a)* solely state-financed and *(b)* public-private partnership and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible have been launched in each of the last 10 years; [160955]

(2) how much was spent by *(a)* the Government on solely state-financed projects and *(b)* the (i) Government and (ii) private sector on public-private and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible in each of the last 10 years. [160956]

Hilary Benn: DFID does not record its projects or spending solely under the categories indicated in the questions and the information could not be obtained without incurring a disproportionate cost.

DFID regards building a healthy private sector in developing countries as essential for poverty reduction. Successful private firms are the principal engines of growth in productivity, employment and income needed to eliminate poverty. DFID's work to encourage private sector development includes but goes well beyond projects directly with the private sector. In summary, DFID works with the public sector to improve the environment for investment and business; with the private sector to expand its access to finance and markets, and to improve its impact on the poor; and with public private partnerships to improve the delivery of public services and technology for the poor.

For information on PFI projects, the Signed Projects List can be found on the Treasury website. This is at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public private partnerships/ppp pfi stats.cfm.

Sugar Regime

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to ensure that the needs of smaller developing sugar producing countries are taken into account when his right hon. Friend negotiates reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. [160766]

Hilary Benn: The European Union (EU) Common Market Organisation for sugar is highly distorted and discriminatory and is unsustainable in its current form. Using a system of quotas and prohibitively high tariffs access has been denied to the EU market for all but a handful of developing country suppliers for more than 30 years. In addition, those developing countries without preferential access to the EU sugar market struggle to compete in third markets with the highly subsidised EU sugar exports. The price of sugar on the EU market is kept artificially high with the consumer ultimately paying through the high end price for sugar and products containing sugar. Estimates vary but put the cost to taxpayers at approximately $2 billion each year. Reform is much needed and long overdue.

The European Commission has not yet tabled any proposals but has set out three options for reform. The Government are still considering which of these specific options represents the best way ahead. Any change to such a highly distorted regime will bring some losers as well as winners. Some of the less efficient traditional preferential suppliers will be affected and may need some sort of transitional assistance to help them adapt. The precise nature and scale of this assistance will depend on the nature and scale of the reform itself. DFID is working closely with other Government Departments to look at the implications of these options for developing countries and identify what assistance might be necessary.

Zambia

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of *(a)* the quality of HIV treatment available in Zambia and *(b)* the extent to which treatment has improved in recent years; and how many people have died from HIV/AIDS in Zambia in each of the last five years. [161795]

Hilary Benn: Treatment of HIV is understood to mean treatment of AIDS retroviral infection, through Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART), as well as treatment of the opportunistic infections it causes.

The number of people who have died of AIDS in Zambia in the last five years is not known; because of stigma and limited diagnostic capacity, AIDS is often not stated or acknowledged as a cause of death. However, from official Government of Zambia figures it is estimated that an average of 100,000 people have died from AIDS in the last five years.

ART was provided by provincial hospitals in Zambia for the first time in 2003. Over 1,000 clients are accessing this treatment at present. The quality of ART has yet to be assessed. However, while the health sector is under funded (with a resource gap of £94 million per year, or 50 per cent. of the health funding needed), and numbers of health workers are falling (at an estimated 10 per cent. per year) due to emigration and health problems, the quality of AIDS treatment is likely to remain poor.

Part of DFID's £20 million HIV/AIDS programme in Zambia provides monitoring and evaluation consultancy services in support of monitoring treatment quality. A further £20 million programme is supporting the strengthening of Zambia's health systems and financing the delivery of public health services, including to people living with HIV/AIDS and those affected by associated opportunistic infections.

Recent efforts to direct limited resources to where they are most needed have resulted in modest improvements. For the first time in many years, and with DFID's support, Zambia had sufficient drugs in 2003 to treat the range of common diseases which afflict poor people,

including opportunistic infections due to AIDS. Disease control measures have also improved. For example, the cure rate for TB, a common AIDS opportunistic infection, improved from 50 per cent. to 55 per cent. between 2000 and 2003.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had regarding the establishment of European Union provincial reconstruction teams in Afghanistan. [160244]

Mr. Ingram: NATO is developing plans to extend ISAF's influence beyond Kabul. The United Kingdom has offered to lead a second Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will answer the Question, Ref:146515, tabled by the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South on 5 January, on the death in British custody of Baha Mousa. [160912]

Mr. Ingram: I replied to the hon. Member on 12 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1773W.

Royal Air Force

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many responses the RAF Continuous Attitudes Survey received for the consultation round launched in September 2003; and if he will make a statement. [160116]

Mr. Caplin: The RAF Continuous General Attitude Survey is issued in February, May, August and November each year. On 1 August 2003 (the last date for which information is available), 2,000 surveys were issued and 1,057 replies were received, giving a response rate of 52.9 per cent.

Departmental Buildings

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the *(a)* land and *(b)* buildings in central London owned by (i) his Department, (ii) its agencies and (iii) the UK armed forces, giving the value in each case. [156709]

Mr. Caplin: The National Asset Register, (NAR), published by HM Treasury, provides a comprehensive list and valuation of all of the assets owned by every Government department and their sponsored bodies. A copy of the 2001 NAR has been placed in the Library of the House and can be accessed on the HM Treasury website at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk. It should be noted that these are asset valuations and do not represent the disposal value of these assets.

In central London the MoD, (including Agencies and Service personnel), holds a number of major properties. Those which have a realisable value to the Department have been valued and included in the NAR.

Such properties are listed in the table with the NAR values shown comprising the sum of the land value and the value of the various buildings. Service Families Accommodation and properties used solely by Visiting Forces and Reserve Forces have been excluded.

Property	*Location*	*Use*	*NAR Value (£)*
Chelsea Barracks	Chelsea	Barracks	58,530,000
DCSA St Vincent	Whitehall	Communications	14,918,000
Great Scotland Yard	Whitehall	Offices	2,557,000
Horse Guards	Whitehall	Barracks	6,130,000
Hyde Park Barracks	Knightsbridge	Barracks	72,170,000
Main Building	Whitehall	Offices	65,909,000
Northumberland House	Whitehall	Offices	11,736,000
Old War Office	Whitehall	Offices	63,370,000
RCDS Seaford House	Westminster	College	1,667,000
Regents Park Barracks	Regents Park	Barracks	29,190,000
Wellington Barracks	Petty France	Barracks	106,210,000

Following the Chief Secretary's letter of 10 September, there is an automatic presumption against locating new and reconstituted activity in London and the South-East and a moratorium against all Government Departments renewing, creating new leases or purchasing freehold property for office-based activities over 2000 sq. m. The Lyons Review reported to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 15 March.

Disposal Services Agency

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many *(a)* vehicles, *(b)* display systems, radios and televisions, *(c)* small generators, *(d)* plant and machinery items, *(e)* tyres and *(f)* uniforms disposed of by the Disposal Services Agency since 1997 were acquired as Urgent Operational Requirements; and what the value of each of these categories was when (i) purchased and (ii) when sold; [161153]

(2) how many *(a)* vehicles, *(b)* display systems, radios and televisions, *(c)* small generators, *(d)* plant and machinery items, *(e)* tyres and *(f)* uniforms disposed of by the Disposal Services Agency since 1997 were un-used at the time of sale; and what the value was of each of these categories (i) when purchased and (ii) when sold; [161152]

(3) how much *(a)* IT equipment, *(b)* office furniture, *(c)* telecommunications equipment, *(d)* electrical equipment, *(e)* scientific equipment, *(f)* unwanted warehouse stocks and *(g)* clothing and fabrics disposed of by the Disposal Services Agency since 1997 was unused at the time of sale; and what the value was of each category of equipment (i) when purchased and (ii) when sold; [161150]

(4) how much *(a)* IT equipment, *(b)* telecommunications equipment, *(c)* electrical equipment, *(d)* scientific equipment, *(e)* unwanted warehouse stocks and *(f)* clothing and fabrics disposed of by the Disposal Services Agency since 1997 were acquired as Urgent Operational Requirements; and what the value was of each category of equipment (i) when purchased and (ii) when sold. [161151]

Mr. Ingram: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Drugs

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many convictions there were for drug-related offences among armed forces personnel in calendar year 2003. [161306]

Mr. Caplin: The number of convictions under the Service Discipline Acts for drug related offences in each of the three Services for the calendar year 2003 is as follows:

Armed forces	*Number of convictions*
Naval Service	9
Army	10
RAF	2

Drugs misuse may also be an aggravating factor in other offences.

Environmentally Sustainable Procurement

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in what ways environmentally sustainable procurement strategies within the Department have driven innovation in the design and supply of products. [159100]

Mr. Ingram: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment on 10 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1542–43W.

The Ministry of Defence is fully involved in the work of the interdepartmental Sustainable Procurement Group (SPG), and is also contributing to the development of the procurement section of the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate.

To address all aspects of sustainable procurement across the Ministry of Defence, we established in 2003 a Sustainable Procurement Working Group (SPWG). To date, the SPWG's primary focus has been on the environmental aspects of equipment procurement and reviewing progress on departmental compliance with policies for procuring sustainable timber, food and construction.

Future Rapid Effects System

Peter Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will make a decision on the Future Rapid Effects System; and if he will make a statement. [157443]

Mr. Ingram: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 245W to the hon. Member for Aldershot (Mr. Howarth).

Gibraltar

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) which military bands will visit Gibraltar in 2004; [160483]

(2) which regiments will visit Gibraltar for the Tercentenary celebrations; [160485]

(3) what role the Royal Air Force will play in the Tercentenary celebrations of Gibraltar; [160486]

(4) what part the Royal Marines will play in the Tercentenary celebrations in Gibraltar. [160517]

Mr. Ingram: Plans are in hand for the following regiments to visit Gibraltar as part of the Tercentenary commemorations:

On 20 March, 60 Support Squadron Royal Engineers (on exercise in Gibraltar) will exercise the right of the Corps of Royal Engineers to march through Gibraltar. The Band of the Royal Engineers will provide marching music.

19/5 (Gibraltar 1779–83) Battery Royal Artillery will fire the Royal Gun Salute in Gibraltar on 21 April on the occasion of HM the Queen's Birthday.

Detachments from 19/5 Battery, 23 Commando HQ Battery, 22 Battery and 21 Battery, together with a detachment from the Royal Engineers and the band of the Prince of Wales Division, will take part in the Queen's Birthday Parade on 10 June.

Small detachments from the following regiments will take part in the following military ceremonial events:

	Ceremonial events
The Royal Anglian Regiment	Ceremonial Guards on 8 May and 12 June
The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment	Ceremony of the Keys on 13 May
The Light Infantry	Ceremony of the Keys on 13 May
The Queen's Lancashire Regiment	Ceremonial Guard on 17 July
The King's Own Royal Border Regiment	Ceremonial Guard on 31 July
Coldstream Guards	Ceremonial Guard on 18 September
Grenadier Guards	Ceremony of the Keys on 14 October

A small detachment from Royal Air Force Gibraltar will take part in the Queen's Birthday Parade on 10 June.

In early autumn and over the weekend 3–5 September, Royal Air Force Gibraltar will commemorate Battle of Britain Day with a series of private and public events. The Band of the Royal Air Force College will perform in public.

The Royal Marines will be taking part in two important ceremonial Tercentenary events: the Queens Birthday Parade which will be held on 10 June 2004 and the Granting of the Freedom of the City to the Royal Navy on 4 August 2004.

Queens Birthday Parade (10 June 2004)

For this parade the Commando Logistic Regiment RM will be providing a guard which will consist of 40 all ranks. The services and regiments taking part in this parade are those that hold the Freedom of the City of Gibraltar; that is the Royal Marines, the Royal Regiment of Artillery, the Corps of Royal Engineers and the Royal Gibraltar Regiment whose colour will be trooped.

Granting of the Freedom of the City of Gibraltar to the Royal Navy (4 August 2004)

The Royal Marines will provide an element of service personnel who will receive the Freedom. Specifically, a Band of the Royal Marines and a troop of 30 will be on parade on this important and historic event.

Military Bases (Contamination)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 10 March, *Official Report*, columns 1490–91W, on military bases (contamination),

(1) if he will place in the Library a list of the land quality assessments prepared across the defence estate since 1995; [161905]

(2) for what regional areas within the defence estate this information is gathered; and whether the data is collected by the Defence Estates Agency. [161981]

Mr. Caplin: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Ministerial Speeches

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many speeches he made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156156]

Mr. Caplin: Between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence made 11 speeches. This figure does not include speeches in the House nor addresses to the internal Ministry of Defence audience. Copies of three of these speeches are currently available on the departmental website, at: www.news.mod.uk/news/press/news_speeches.asp. The page is currently in the process of being updated, and all 11 will be available there shortly.

Defence Contracts (Wales)

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list Welsh firms that have contracts with the Ministry of Defence; and how much departmental expenditure has been with these firms in each year since 1997. [158897]

Mr. Ingram: The Department's records show that the suppliers listed have received MOD contracts under which some or all of the work involved will have been performed in Wales. All these suppliers have received payments on these contracts exceeding £1 million in the financial year 2002–03:

Aircraft Maintenance Support
Alenia Marconi Systems
BAe Systems
Brama Brown and Root and Marshall
Cogent Defence and Security
Cowlin Construction Enersys
Dara
General Dynamics UK
Golley Slater and Partners
Irvin-GQ
Ilanelec Precision Engineering
North Midland Construction
Qinetiq
Sodexho Defence Services
Thales Air Defence
Thales Optics
The Royal Mint
Watkin Jones and Son
WS Atkins Facilities

The value of the contracts where some or all of the work will have been performed in Wales during the period 1997–98 to 2002–03 is as follows.

	£ million
1997–98	100
1998–99	Not available
1999–2000	125
2000–01	141
2001–02	252
2002–03	227

Defence Staff (Wales)

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the changes in Ministry of Defence staff in Wales for the November 2003 to January 2004 quarter. [158895]

Mr. Caplin: Staffing levels and changes for Ministry of Defence civilian staff in Wales (full-time equivalent figures for industrial and non-industrial, permanent staff, excluding Royal Fleet Auxiliaries and those on career breaks, long term sick leave, secondments etc.) are as follows:

Date	*Civilian staff*
January 2004	3,880
December 2003	3,900
November 2003	3,940
October 2003	3,950

This includes Trading Fund staff.

Full time equivalent is a measure of the size of the workforce that takes account of the fact that some people work part-time.

When rounding civilian staff numbers to the nearest ten, numbers ending in five have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Changes are calculated from unrounded data, and then rounded to the nearest 10.

Naval Personnel (Asbestos)

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if his Department will review the disabled pension paid to ex-Naval servicemen suffering lung problems resulting from asbestos insulation in ships. [147851]

Mr. Caplin: Ex-Naval servicemen suffering as a result of their service from lung problems resulting from asbestos insulation in ships have the same entitlement to disablement pensions as any other ex-Servicemen suffering from injury or illness due to service. We have no plan to change these entitlements retrospectively. The House will be aware that for the future we have recognised the need to review our arrangements to bring them into line with modern good practice as part of the Armed Forces Pensions and Compensation Bill currently before the House.

Officer Numbers

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the expected retirement dates of all officers above the rank of OF 2 in the *(a)* Army, *(b)* Royal Navy and *(c)* RAF, broken down by rank; and if he will make a statement. [161058]

Mr. Caplin: It is not possible to provide meaningful aggregated information due to the complexity of service conditions relating to retirement. Each of the services has its individual regulations and, indeed, within each service retirement criteria can vary considerably depending on factors such as length of service, rank and professional speciality.

Procurement

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total expenditure was on procurement by each of the services in the last year for which figures are available; and how much of the procurement budget for each was spent in Scotland. [159304]

Mr. Ingram: Details of procurement expenditure are not available broken down by service. Up to 1998–99 United Kingdom Defence Statistics, published annually by the Defence Analytical Services Agency in UK Defence Statistics (available in the Library of the House), identified expenditure on equipment for the "Sea", "Land" and "Air" environments together with "other" equipment not specific to an environment. This division does not necessarily match the end destination of the equipment. For example not all aerospace equipment is used solely by the RAF. Since 1998–99 the format for recording expenditure has changed following the introduction of Smart Acquisition and the move from cash to Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB). Expenditure on procurement is now subsumed within the Principal Headings of the Defence Budget (Table 1.3 of the 2003 UK Defence Statistics). The Government's most recent expenditure plans for Defence (Cm 5912) published in May 2003 also identify procurement expenditure under the RAB regime. The 2002–03 accounts of the Defence Procurement Agency, HC2, are available in the Library of the House, and provide a summary of its expenditure on equipment procurement against the major Defence capability areas. Detail of equipment expenditure by region has not been included in the UK Defence Statistics since 2001.

Regimental Unit Designations

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will use the opportunity of unit re-organisations consequent to the Defence White Paper better to reflect and recognise the lineage of current regiments, including regiments disbanded under previous re-organisations, in the designation of companies and other units below regiment level. [161221]

Mr. Caplin: Any re-organisation would be based on the need to ensure that the Army is able to respond to the changing strategic environment and meet the operational challenges of the future. This is vital if the armed forces are to be prepared for the broad range of operational tasks that they are likely to be engaged in. However, history and tradition are, of course, also important and are always considered.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what requirement has been established for unmanned aerial vehicles; and what timetable has been set for the requirement; [158512]

(2) what plans there are for unmanned aerial vehicles to operate from aircraft carriers. [158513]

Mr. Ingram: We currently have a requirement to provide for the land environment accurate, timely and high quality imagery to UK commanders. To meet this requirement the Watchkeeper programme is on track to deliver from 2006 an intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) system using tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). Watchkeeper will subsume the in-service Phoenix UAV capability. In response to an urgent operational requirement arising in Iraq, we have acquired Desert Hawk mini-UAVs from the United States. I am withholding details about their use in accordance with Exemption 1 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information for reasons of operational security.

There are currently no plans to procure other operational UAVs. We have established the Joint UAV Experimentation Programme (JUEP) to explore the wider operational utility of UAV systems in the joint battlespace, including an investigation into the utility of UAVs for maritime operations. Under the Future Offensive Air System programme we expect to look at a potential mix of platforms, including Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs), to meet our future strike capability from around the end of the next decade.

Wind Farms

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many formal applications for wind power projects were opposed by his Department in each of the last five years. [159734]

Mr. Caplin: The number of formal applications for wind power projects objected to by the MOD is detailed as follows:

	Number of objections
2001	2
2002	3
2003	4

Note:
1. No figures available prior to 2001.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the number of people living in Zimbabwe who are entitled to a British Army pension. [160729]

Mr. Caplin: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on elections in Afghanistan. [157466]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The UK supports the efforts being taken by the UN and the Afghan Transitional Administration to prepare for elections later this year.

The UK has contributed £3 million to these preparations to date, and DFID are considering committing further funds. We encourage the international community to fully support the Afghan Government and the UN in their preparations for the elections. This will be one of the issues covered at the Berlin Conference on Afghanistan on 31 March—1 April, which I will attend.

Bangladesh

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Bangladesh about the protection of human rights of members of the Ahmadiyya community. [160764]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1302W.

Beef

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 5 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1188W, on beef, what the monetary value of the contract with the principal supplier is in relation to beef. [161418]

Mr. Rammell: The supplier spends approximately £20,000 per annum on beef bought in relation to its contract with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Burma

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his European counterparts regarding economic sanctions on Burma. [161333]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The EU Common Position aims to target the military regime and its associates while avoiding measures that hurt, as far as possible, the Burmese people. We have regular discussions with our EU partners on this.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Burmese Government regarding human rights in that country. [161379]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I regularly raise the Government's concerns on human rights in Burma with the Burmese authorities, most recently when I met the Burmese Ambassador on 23 February. We co-sponsored the UN General Assembly Human Rights Resolution on Burma last December and will play an active role in the forthcoming UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. We strongly support the efforts of Sergio Pinheiro the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has made to the Burmese Government on the prolonged detention under Article 10a of the 1975 State Protection Act of political prisoners who have already served their sentences; [161491]

(2) what representations he has made to the Government of Burma on the *(a)* detention and *(b)* imprisonment of 52 persons after 30 May 2003. [161492]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We have repeatedly called on the Burmese regime to release fully all political prisoners and to allow them to play an active role in national reconciliation in Burma.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he received on the construction of a new road by the Burma Army south-east from Mawchi. [161494]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I am aware of a report from Christian Solidarity Worldwide, compiled on the basis of information from Karenni groups, of a road being built by the Burmese army to access a mine south east of Mawchi in Kayah State. Security restrictions prevent staff from our embassy from travelling to this area to verify this information.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Government of Myanmar regarding the *(a)* civil and *(b)* political rights of the Karen people. [161648]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We are concerned by the issue of ethnic minority rights and the abuses suffered by ethnic groups in Burma including the Karen people. The UK has repeatedly called on the Burmese military regime to enter into genuine and substantive dialogue with all political parties and ethnic groups in Burma leading to national reconciliation.

Butler Committee

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Butler Committee Inquiry will post original submissions made to the inquiry on its website; and whether he has placed any restrictions on publication of information provided to the committee. [161160]

Mr. Rammell: The Butler Committee's news release of 12 February states that the review will be carried out in private. Given the nature of much of the material the Committee will receive, normal national security rules will apply.

Cyprus

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications of the possible reunification of Cyprus for British interests on the island; and if he will make a statement. [161283]

Mr. Rammell: The UK has a very strong, indirect interest in a successful Cyprus settlement, which has informed our support for the UN Secretary-General's good offices mission.

A possible Cyprus settlement will have little impact on the day to day operations of the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs).

The UK has made an offer to the UN Secretary-General to cede part of the SBAs to the new United Cyprus Republic in order to facilitate a settlement. The

land offer will only come in to effect if there is a settlement and the island unites under the terms of the UN Secretary-General's proposals. The operational effectiveness of the SBAs will not be affected.

EU Constitution

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the United Kingdom red lines in respect of the EU Constitutional Treaty; whether the draft Treaty meets these conditions; and if he will make a statement on progress that has been made in negotiating on each of these issues. [161211]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my hon. Friend to Cm. 5934, the Government's White Paper on its approach to the IGC, which sets out the UK's position on the draft Constitutional Treaty.

As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister told the House in December, with regard to the IGC,

"nothing is agreed until everything is agreed".—[Official Report, 15 December 2003; Vol. 415. c. 1320.]

There has been no formal agreement on any single point of the draft Treaty. It is for the Irish Presidency to build on the progress made under the Italians.

The Irish Presidency are currently consulting all member states on the prospects for resuming negotiations on the Constitutional Treaty for the EU. They will report to the European Council on 25–26 March with their conclusions.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's position is with regard to the new draft proposals of an EU constitution presented by the Irish Presidency. [161371]

Mr. Rammell: The Irish Presidency has not presented any draft proposals on the EU Constitutional Treaty. The Irish Presidency are currently consulting all member states on the prospects for resuming negotiations on the Constitutional Treaty for the EU. They will report to the European Council on 25–26 March with their conclusions.

Gender Equality

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to ratify and implement the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women Optional Protocol. [160903]

Mr. Rammell: The Government are currently reviewing the United Kingdom's position in relation to a number of international human rights instruments. This review includes the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women which allows the right of individual petition. We will announce the outcomes of the review to Parliament as soon as is reasonably possible.

Haiti

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the role played by small arms provided by other states during recent violence in Haiti. [161212]

Mr. Rammell: The proliferation of small arms is of particular concern in Haiti. However, it is difficult to assess the extent of the problem of proliferation and the source of the weapons as the quality of record keeping and standards of import controls in Haiti is very poor. Furthermore with no British embassy in Port-au-Prince our assessments are limited.

Regionally, the UK is providing relevant support to the CARICOM Task Force on Crime and Security, of which Haiti is a member. Last year we commissioned a report on the problem, which highlighted a series of recommendations to help address the issue. This report was presented to the CARICOM in February 2004.

Iraq

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people have been detained by coalition forces in Iraq since major hostilities ceased; how many are in custody; and how many of these are non-Iraqis, broken down by nationality. [154278]

Mr. Ingram: I have been asked to reply.

We do not hold data on the number of people detained by coalition forces as a whole. As at 8 March 2004, 83 individuals are being held by UK forces at the Divisional Temporary Detention Facility in Multinational Division (SE) in Iraq. Of these, three are non-Iraqi—one Sudanese, one Saudi Arabian and one Egyptian.

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps *(a)* he is taking and *(b)* he plans to take to ensure that British companies involve Iraqi people in the management of and employment in their operations in Iraq. [159000]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: It is important that UK companies play their part in developing Iraq, through the creation of joint business ventures, transfer of skills and technology and working with Iraqi partners in providing jobs and prosperity for the Iraqi people. UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) has been working with a number of stakeholders such as the Coalition Provisional Authority, Iraqi ministries and both the Iraqi and UK private sector to help facilitate contacts. UKTI has also arranged a number of events in London, and in neighbouring countries, aimed at explaining the modalities of doing business in Iraq and bidding for reconstruction contracts. The British Reconstruction Office in Baghdad helps UK firms to identify potential Iraqi partners.

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what guarantees he offers to British companies wanting to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq regarding the safety of their *(a)* employees and *(b)* assets. [159001]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We do not offer guarantees to British companies regarding the safety of employees and company assets while working in Iraq. British companies considering sending staff to Iraq are advised to consult the current travel advice, published on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website, www.fco.gov.uk, which advises against visits to Iraq unless there is a strong commercial or professional reason to visit. Companies

with planned involvement in reconstruction projects are also advised to contact the Iraq Unit in UK Trade and Investment for further information.

We do provide general advice and information on a range of issues to British companies wanting to assist in the reconstruction process in Iraq but it is for the companies themselves to assess the risks of and take the necessary measures to ensure the safety of their employees and assets.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to work with the other occupying powers in Iraq to ensure that *(a)* those Iraqi workers who were dismissed for trade union activities under Saddam Hussein are reinstated and *(b)* the International Labour Organisation is invited to assist the framing of Iraq's new labour and employment laws. [159645]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer of 10 March 2004]:* Judging the claims for reinstatement of Iraqi workers dismissed under the former regime is a matter for Iraqis. We attach great importance to the establishment of free trade unions to prevent similar abouses in the future. The Government have called on the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to assist in the creation of democratic trades unions in Iraq. To this end, the ICFTU organised a fact-finding mission to Iraq in February, with support from British officials. We also used our influence in favour of the Transitional Administrative Law, signed by the Iraqi Governing Council on 8 March 2004, including guarantees of 'free peaceable assembly and the right to join associations freely, as well as the right to form and join unions and political parties freely, in accordance with the law'.

The Coalition Provisional Authority, in conjunction with other organisations, is working on a revised draft of the labour law. They are utilising the skills of not only the ILO, but also the Iraqi Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the US Department of Labor, as well as several other professionals.

Maldives

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of respect for human rights in the Maldives. [160668]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: In December 2003, the Maldives established a Human Rights Commission to protect, promote and preserve human rights in the Maldives. Officials from our high commission in Colombo called on the chair of the commission in January, and expressed to him our concern about reports of human rights abuses in the Maldives. We will continue to monitor the situation closely, and are considering with our European partners what further action we might take.

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on relations between the EU and the Maldives. [160670]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: EU Heads of Mission in Colombo maintain a close interest in the Maldives and many visit regularly. Interest has been heightened in the light of recent events and the reports of human rights abuses.

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the current *(a)* bilateral treaties, *(b)* agreements and *(c)* protocols between the British Government and the government of the Maldives. [160671]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The UK has three such agreements with the Maldives: a 1953 Agreement on the Protection of the Islands; a 1976 Exchange of Notes terminating a 1965 agreement relating to military access; and a 1996 Agreement concerning air services.

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the current Government advice is to British citizens in respect of *(a)* bilateral trade with and *(b)* tourism in the Maldives. [160672]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Advice on trade issues is usually tailored to meet particular needs of individual British companies considering business in the Maldives. Travel advice for the Maldives, produced by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), is available on the FCO website: www.fco.gov.uk. Tourists are advised that while most visits are trouble free, they should take care of their valuables and other personnel possessions. We also draw attention to the fact that possession of drugs carries severe penalties and that public observance of a religion other than Islam is prohibited.

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British citizens visited the Maldives in 2003 *(a)* on official business, *(b)* on commercial missions and *(c)* on holiday. [160673]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The total number of foreign visitors to the Maldives in 2003 was 563,593, according to Maldivian Government Statistics. We do not have figures either for British visitors, or for the purposes of visit.

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received on behalf of prisoners at Maafushi Island Prison in the Maldives. [160675]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Since their formation in exile in November 2003, the Maldivian Democratic Party has raised, with Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials, human rights issues, including the condition and treatment of prisoners in Maafushi Island Prison.

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many *(a)* solely state-financed and *(b)* public-private partnership and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible have been launched in each of the last 10 years; [160975]

(2) how much was spent by *(a)* the Government on solely state-financed projects and *(b)* the (i) the Government and (ii) private sector on public-private and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible, in each of the last 10 years. [160976]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) major capital investment projects cover Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and our Estate. The value of these, and details of major new contracts let on the estate are captured in the FCO annual Departmental Reports. Copies of which are available in the Library of the House. The values are summarised in the following table.

Long term capital projects

	Nominal costs	*Estimated provision*
2003–04	ICT	36,240
2003–04	Estate Building Projects	35,900
	Total	72,140
2002–03	ICT	49,447
2002–03	Estate Building Projects	50,500
	Total	99,947
2001–02	ICT	42,400
2001–02	Estate Building Projects	54,600
	Total	97,000
2000–01	ICT	32,730
2000–01	Estate Building Projects	72,886
	Total	105,616
1999–2000	ICT	31,799
1999–2000	Estate Building Projects	65,494
	Total	97,293
1998–99	ICT	29,601
1998–99	Estate Building Projects	46,080
	Total	75,681
1997–98	ICT	24,285
1997–98	Estate Building Projects	51,045
	Total	75,330
1996–97	ICT	10,947
1996–97	Estate Building Projects	57,761
	Total	68,708
1995–96	ICT	18,337
1995–96	Estate Building Projects	94,436
	Total	112,773
1994–95	ICT	[1]—
1994–95	Estate Building Projects	[1]—
	Total	[1]—

[1] Data not available

Source:

Appendix—Departmental Report

We have had only two PFI projects in the last 10 years:

(i) The construction of a new Embassy in Berlin in 2000, with a capital value of £17.1 million,

(ii) The FCO Telecommunications Network in 2001, with a capital value of £73.9 million.

Data by region and numbers of projects can be provided only at disproportionate costs.

Serbia and Montenegro

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports of claims by the UN War Crimes Tribunal that indicted Bosnian Serbs may be resident in Belgrade; what steps he has taken to establish the veracity of these claims; and what representations the UK has made to the Government of Serbia and Montenegro on this issue. [161209]

Mr. Rammell: We cannot confirm that Karadzic and Mladic are in Belgrade. It is essential that all countries in the region co-operate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and that Serbia and Montenegro do more to help bring indictees to justice.

The UK, with the international community, continues to press for the transfer of Karadzic, Mladic (and Gotovina) to the Hague. They should surrender or the countries of the region should find and arrest them.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Sudan on the effects of its military action on civilians in Darfur. [160927]

Mr. Mullin: We are in almost daily contact with the Government of Sudan and the various Darfur groups about the situation in Darfur and the effects of military action on civilians there. We have raised our concerns at the highest levels in Khartoum, and both our ambassador and the UK special representative for Sudan have recently discussed the matter with the First Vice-President. We are urging the government to negotiate a cease-fire, facilitate humanitarian access to all those in need, and resume talks to find a peaceful solution to Darfur's problems.

Venezuela

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what communications his Department has had with the Government of Venezuela following the recent violence in Caracas. [161017]

Mr. Rammell: Following the demonstrations in Caracas on 27 February 2004, the British Ambassador has called on the President of the Supreme Court, Dr. Ivan Rincon, the Minister of Energy and Mines, Mr. Rafael Ramirez and the Fiscal General, Dr. Isaias Rodriguez. The United Kingdom is fully aligned with the EU statement on Venezuela issued on 4 March 2004, calling on all parties involved in the Venezuelan political process to work towards a democratic and peaceful solution to the crisis.

Western Sahara

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make an assessment of fishing in the Western Sahara; and what discussions he has had with the Moroccan authorities on the threat of over-fishing. [160124]

Mr. Rammell: The EU has on several occasions held discussions with Morocco on fishing since the expiry of the EU Morocco Fisheries Agreement on 30 November 1999.

We have had no recent bilateral discussions with Morocco regarding fishing.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Sure Start Maternity Grant

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many mothers in Crosby have taken up the Sure Start maternity grant. [160523]

Mr. Pond: Sure Start Maternity Grants (SSMGs) replaced Social Fund Maternity Payments from March 2000 at the rate of £200 per child, this was increased to £300 in September 2000 and to £500 for children born on or after 16 June 2002. Sure Start Maternity Grants are single payments that are paid to either the mother of a child or their partner.

The information is not available in the format requested; the available information is in the table.

Applications and awards for Sure Start Maternity Grants for Knowsley and Sefton Jobcentre Plus District.

	SSMG applications	*SSMG awards*
2000–01	2,076	1,867
2001–02	2,270	2,002
2002–03	2,714	2,254
2003–04[1]	2,634	2,129

[1] Data for 2003–04 is for April 2003 to February 2004 only. *Note:* Crosby Parliamentary Constituency is part of the Knowsley and Sefton Jobcentre Plus District which was formed by merging Knowsley Social Fund District and Sefton Social Fund District in October 2003. For comparison purposes, data before the merger is given for Knowsley Social Fund District and Sefton Social Fund District
combined.
Source:
DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System.

Child Support Agency

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the handling of the case of Mr. Graeme Lester of West Ewell by the Child Support Agency. [160240]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. As individual cases are confidential he will write to the hon. Member privately about Mr. Lester's case.

Council Tax Benefit

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the take-up rate of council tax benefit was in the borough of Redcar and Cleveland in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003; [161692]

(2) what the average rate is of council tax benefit take-up. [161693]

Mr. Pond: The information requested is not available. National estimates of take-up of council tax benefit are presented in the DWP report series 'Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up'. Latest estimates relate to financial year 2001–02 and copies of the published report are held in the Library.

Estimates of council tax benefit take-up cover private households in Great Britain; sub-national estimates cannot be reliably produced.

Employers' Liability Insurance

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps are being taken to deal with employers who operate without compulsory employers' liability insurance. [160870]

Mr. Browne: Enforcement is undertaken on a day to day basis by Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspectors. Recent HSE research indicates a high level of compliance, over 99 per cent.

Nevertheless, the Government's recent report of the review of Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance (ELCI) sets out a range of actions to improve enforcement. These include commitments to monitor the take-up and ensure ELCI compliance from bodies that contract with the public sector, following publication of new guidance.

A copy of the report is available in the Library.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to ensure enforcement of compulsory employers' liability insurance at local level; and if he will make a statement. [160871]

Mr. Browne: Enforcement of employers' liability compulsory insurance at local level is undertaken by the Health and Safety Executive. Recent research indicates a high level of compliance, over 99 per cent.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the outcome of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council held on 4 March was; what the Government's stance on the issues discussed was, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [160101]

Mr. Pond: I represented the UK at this Council, accompanied by my hon. friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Employment Relations, Competition and Consumers (Mr. Sutcliffe).

The main business was agreement of a package of ESPHCA Council contributions to the forthcoming Spring European Council meeting. There was a public debate on the 'key issues' paper summarising priorities in employment policy, social protection and inclusion.

The UK welcomed the key issues paper, particularly the single set of key messages that covered both the employment and social aspects of the Lisbon agenda. We highlighted the need to focus on creating more and better jobs in line with the employment targets set out at Lisbon in 2000 and refined at Stockholm in 2001 and Barcelona in 2002.

All member states welcomed the forthcoming tripartite social summit as a useful vehicle for social partners' contribution to achieving the Lisbon goals.

The Council also noted without comment: the work programmes for the Social Protection Committee and the Employment Committee; a series of reports on Presidency events; and a report by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation.

The Council discussed the Commission's review of the working time directive informally over lunch.

There were no votes taken at this council.

Ethnic Minorities Policies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what *(a)* advice and *(b)* support he receives in ensuring that policies he implements in regard to ethnic minorities reach their target. [156125]

Mr. Browne: The policy initiatives we implement are generally subject to performance monitoring processes. The data that we gather allows month by month monitoring of performance against targets if these have been set. We also monitor our own services to ensure that ethnic minority customers receive equal treatment and benefit equally from our provision.

The Department for Work and Pensions leads on the work of the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force, created in response to the recommendations made by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. The Task Force comprises Ministers from Departments responsible for implementing the recommendations—DWP, DTI, DfES, Home Office and ODPM—as well as representatives from external stakeholders such as the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), the Confederation of British Industry and the Trades Union Congress. The Task Force is an important body, offering advice and helping to steer our policies.

We realise that partnership—at national, regional and local levels—is fundamental to the success of our diversity policies. As such, we are in a constant state of engagement with our partners, stakeholders and relevant pressure groups, seeking advice on current and future initiatives. As part of this we are in the process of setting up a stakeholder group, the chair of which will become a member of the Task Force itself.

New Deal

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne) on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1342W, on the New Deal for Young People, what the projected cost is for the unit costing system to be operational in April; and if he will make a statement; [156657]

(2) pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne) on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1342W, on the New Deal for Young People, what the original projected date of completion was for the Resource Management System; what the current projected completion date is for the system; what the original projected cost of the system was; what the current projected cost of the system is; what the reasons are for the delays in introducing the system on time; and if he will make a statement. [156658]

Mr. Browne: Our initial aim was for the Department's Resource Management System (RMS) to become operational from April 2003, with costs estimated at £144 million[1]. However, initial negotiations with suppliers resulted in proposals that did not meet the Department's requirements, both in terms of value for money and management of the system.

Competition for the contract for Resource Management Systems operations work is in progress under EU rules. We have advertised for the provision of operational services through the *Official Journal* of the European Union and a small number of potential bidders have qualified. A statement of requirements is being drawn up with the aim of issuing an Invitation to Tender in April 2004, and awarding a contract in August 2004.

Costs and completion dates will be determined during the tendering process but planning assumptions are that roll out of the new system will commence from September 2005 for 12 months, with likely costs estimated at £151 million[1].

Information on the projected cost of the unit costing system, scheduled to be operational in April, is not separately available.

[1] Figures are rounded to nearest million.

Unemployment (Jarrow)

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what further measures are being taken to reduce youth unemployment in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear and *(d)* the United Kingdom; [159507]

(2) what action the Government have taken to help reduce unemployment in the Jarrow constituency since 1997. [159509]

Mr. Browne: Through a combination of economic stability and radical labour market reforms, more than 1.7 million more people are in work now than in 1997 and unemployment is at its lowest level since 1975. Despite a period of global economic insecurity the UK has prospered so that both the UK employment rate and ILO unemployment rate are the best of the major industrialised (G7) countries.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are providing everyone of working age—the unemployed, lone parents, sick and disabled people—with advice, guidance and a full range of support to help them move into work.

Jarrow has shared in this success. As well as the reductions in claimant unemployment in Jarrow since 1997, long term youth unemployment has been cut by 85 per cent. The local Jobcentre has played an important part in these achievements, helping clients move into work and working closely with employers. By the end of December 2003, the New Deal, had helped over 479,500 young people move from welfare into work in the UK, including over 7,500 in the South Tyneside and Gateshead District and over 1,200 in Jarrow.

From April 2004 New Deal for Partners will be re-introduced throughout the South Tyneside and Gateshead district running alongside Work Focused Interviews for Partners as part of the Government's initiative to encourage partners of benefit claimants to become economically active and thereby reduce the number of households where currently no-one works.

We have now introduced Progress 2 Work/LinkUp, a support programme to help the most disadvantaged take up training provision and ultimately move into

employment. These client groups include people with drugs and alcohol problems, homeless people and ex-offenders.

Winter Fuel Allowance

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many senior citizens in Crosby have benefited from the winter fuel allowance since 1997. [160583]

Malcolm Wicks: The requested information is only available from 1999–2000.This is in the following table. Details for this winter are not yet available because applications can be made up to 30 March.

	Payments made
1999–2000	14,965
2000–01	16,615
2001–02	16,835
2002–03	17,020

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Figures taken from the Matching Intelligence Data Analysis Service Winter Fuel Payments exercise.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. samples.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many eligible Scottish pensioners had applied for and had not received winter fuel payments by *(a)* 1 December 2003, *(b)* 1 January and *(c)* 1 February. [159852]

Malcolm Wicks: It is not possible to say how many pensioners living in Scotland are eligible for a winter fuel payment this winter. The great majority of pensioners who were eligible were paid before Christmas without having to apply. It is not possible at present to say how many payments have been made to pensioners in Scotland but the information will be placed in the Library later in the year.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what criteria are used to decide claims by *(a)* refugees and *(b)* asylum seekers for winter fuel payment. [161820]

Malcolm Wicks: The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 excludes persons subject to immigration control (mainly asylum seekers) from income-related and other non-contributory social security benefits, from 3 April 2000 the Home Office is responsible for supporting and accommodating asylum seekers awaiting a determination of their case. Therefore, asylum seekers would not be eligible for a Social Fund Winter Fuel Payment. However, those asylum seekers in receipt of income-related benefits prior to 3 April 2000 continue to be entitled to social security benefits, including a Social Fund Winter Fuel Payment provided they have attained the age of 60 in the qualifying week.

Asylum seekers granted refugee status are no longer subject to immigration control and are entitled to social security benefits on the same basis as UK nationals. A person granted refugee status would therefore qualify for a winter fuel payment in the same way as other UK residents aged 60 or over.

CABINET OFFICE

Regulatory Impact Assessments

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on the monitoring of the *(a)* quality and *(b)* thoroughness of regulatory impact assessments. [160135]

Mr. Alexander: Cabinet Office Regulatory Impact Unit (CORIU) continues to work with departments to ensure that Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) are consistent with the most recent guidance. From April this year departments will have to provide information on better regulation, including their compliance with the RIA process and their use of RIAs, as part of their annual reporting requirements,

The National Audit Office (NAO) has undertaken an ongoing role to evaluate the quality and thoroughness of a sample of RIAs each year. The recently published NAO Compendium Report on the Evaluation of RIAs for 2003–04 noted that the CORIU has achieved significant progress in increasing the quality of RIAs.

Telephones

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what estimate he has made of the annual telephone costs of *(a)* his Department, *(b)* their agencies and *(c)* the Government Information and Communication Service in (i) 1996–97 and (ii) the latest period for which figures are available. [159336]

Mr. Alexander: Annual telephone costs for the year ended 31 March 2003 for the Cabinet Office were £3,881,192.

Government Information and Communication Service costs were £19,168 for 2002–03.

Government Car and Despatch Agency costs were £76,100 for 2002–03.

Information for 1996–97 is not readily available andcould only be obtained at disproportionate costs.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the hon. Member for West Worcestershire will receive a response to his letter of 4 February to the Minister of State. [161659]

Phil Hope: A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 9 March 2004.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Prosser: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many sick days were taken on average in 2003 by staff in *(a)* his Department's headquarters and *(b)* each agency for which his Department is responsible. [161478]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established following the machinery of Government changes in May 2002.

The most recent "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service" was published by the Cabinet Office on 1 December 2003. This covered the calendar year 2002 for the Cabinet Office, the predecessor Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions and its executive agencies.

Figures for 2003 will be announced in due course.

Housing

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on how the change in the level of council funding for housing has affected the residents of Crosby since 1997. [160567]

Keith Hill: Since 1997 allocations of capital funding to local authorities for housing purposes have risen consistently by about 15 per cent. per annum on average. This includes the Major Repairs Allowance the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister introduced in 2001–02 specifically for the improvement of local authority stock alongside the Decent Homes standard which sets out minimum standards to be met by 2010. Sefton's allocations in the period 1997 to 2003–04 have risen by over 200 per cent.. In addition to this welcome increase there is support through the Community Housing Task Force and Government Office for the North West to help the Local Authority and its tenants to choose the best strategy for long term improvement.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on how the *(a)* Starter Homes Initiative and *(b)* Abandoned Homes Initiative have affected the residents of Buckingham. [161321]

Keith Hill: Since September 2001, the Starter Home Initiative has been helping key workers into home ownership in areas where the high cost of housing is undermining the recruitment and retention of skilled staff in our key public services. By the end of February 2004, 86 key workers employed in the Aylesbury Vale District Council area, in which Buckingham is located, had bought homes under the Starter Home Initiative.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is not aware of an "Abandoned Homes Initiative". The Market Renewal Pathfinders programme tackles low demand and abandonment in a number of areas where this is a significant problem. This programme is not providing funding in Buckingham.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assistance his Department provides for people wishing to get onto the property ladder in Chorley. [161399]

Keith Hill: The Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme provides funding for schemes, such as shared ownership (part buy/part rent), to assist people into home ownership in line with regional strategies and investment priorities.

In the current financial year (2003–04) £0.9 million of Housing Corporation funding has been allocated to provide 30 shared ownership dwellings in Chorley, and to date 107 social housing tenants in Chorley have purchased their rented home under the Right to Buy scheme.

Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what correspondence he has received concerning the definition of a member in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003; and what steps he is taking to amend the definition. [161515]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received a number of letters from Parish Councils in recent weeks, many sent via their local Member of Parliament, in respect of the definition of a member in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations.

This definition excludes un-elected parish councillors who are not therefore entitled to receive allowances for travel and subsistence. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be amending the regulations governing councillors' allowances shortly so that all parish councillors are eligible to receive such allowances.

Local Authority Housing

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received from *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* others in support of the fourth option of keeping council housing stock in the hands of local government. [161011]

Keith Hill: In the last twelve months, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received eleven representations regarding support or suggestions for a fourth option. Two of these are from a local authority, while a further two were received from a tenant protest group expressing their wish for councils to keep control of their housing stock. The remainder were from concerned tenants and their representatives, including four MPs.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also received six parliamentary questions, including this one, on whether a fourth option would be developed and funded by the Government.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the level of council tax receipts in England collected in each year since 1997 was; and what the forecast figures are for the coming year. [161500]

Mr. Raynsford: The amounts of council tax collected by English local authorities during each financial year since 1996–97, irrespective of the year to which they related, are tabled as follows. They exclude amounts paid for through council tax benefit.

Amounts of council tax collected, England

	£ million
1996–97	8,799
1997–98	9,570
1998–99	10,579
1999–2000	11,457
2000–01	12,242
2001–02	13,208
2002–03	14,510

Figures for the amounts of council tax collected are not requested from local authorities until after the end of the relevant financial year. The amounts received during 2003–04 and 2004–05 will depend upon the council tax levels set for each year, changes in the tax base, the collection rates achieved, amounts of council tax benefit expenditure incurred, and amounts collected in respect of earlier years.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the revenue expenditure of each local authority in England has been since 1993–94. [161502]

Mr. Raynsford: A table with the relevant information has been made available in the Library of the House.

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* solely state-financed and *(b)* public-private partnership and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible have been launched in each region in each of the last 10 years. [160971]

Mr. Raynsford: Since the creation of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in May 2002 there has been no new Public Private Partnerships (PPP) projects signed. However, seven Private Finance Initiative (PFI) projects have been signed and these are broken down as follows:

In the North West region, two projects were launched in 2002 and one in 2003;

In the North East region, one project was launched in 2003;

In London and the South East region, one project was launched in 2002 and two in 2003.

The information on solely state-financed projects is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Colman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was spent by *(a)* the Government on solely state-financed projects and *(b)* the (i) Government and (ii) private sector on public-private and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible, in each of the last 10 years, broken down by region. [160972]

Mr. Raynsford: Since the establishment of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in May 2002 a total of seven Private Finance Initiative projects have been signed with a total capital value of £233.18 million, the capital value of these projects, which the Government are supporting is as follows:

In the North West region, the capital value of two projects signed in 2002 is £16.56 million and the one signed in 2003 is £61.55 million;

In the North East region, the capital value of one project signed in 2003 is £29.77 million;

In London and the South East region, the capital value of one project signed in 2002 is £9.3 million and two projects signed in 2003 is £116 million.

The information on solely state-financed projects is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Electoral Commission concerning the method of voting to be used in the referendums for elected regional assemblies; and what advice he has received from the Commission on this issue. [159823]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published consultation papers and draft Orders on 18 December 2003 on the detailed procedures by which the all-postal referendums would be governed. The Electoral Commission has published its response to that consultation, which is available from www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is in the process of consulting the Electoral Commission, as required by the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003, before the Orders governing the referendums are laid in Parliament.

Regional Government

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what areas of policy will be *(a)* devolved from central Government to regional government and *(b)* transferred from local authorities to regional government; [158906]

(2) when he will publish the details of the policy areas that will be transferred to regional government. [158907]

Mr. Raynsford: The vast majority of elected regional assembly powers will be devolved from central Government. These were set out in the Regional Governance White Paper, "Your Region, Your Choice Revitalising the English Regions". Assemblies will take over responsibility for areas of economic development, housing, planning, transport, culture, the environment, public health and sustainable development.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Phil Hope) has made clear previously, responsibility for fire will pass to elected assemblies as announced in the Fire White Paper, "Our Fire and Rescue Service".

Regional Housing Boards

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has issued to ensure that Regional Housing Boards and supporting people teams work in partnership. [158782]

Yvette Cooper: To date the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not issued any guidance in respect of Supporting People to the Regional Housing Boards and will be considering the role of Regional Bodies in Supporting People as part of the work following on from the Independent Review.

Supporting People Initiative

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what contingency funding he has retained centrally for Supporting People in 2004–05; and what criteria he will apply in deciding how to allocate such funding. [159933]

Yvette Cooper: One of the main objectives of the Supporting People programme has been to devolve the responsibility for commissioning support services to local Supporting People teams. All Supporting People programme grant is allocated to the 149 administering authorities.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to increase the funding to those Supporting People teams where the late announcement of pipeline funding has led to a delay in the utilisation of properties purchased through the Housing Corporation. [156885]

Yvette Cooper: The Government commissioned the Independent Review of Supporting People after the resources required by local authorities increased substantially during the course of last year. Resources for 2004–05 were not allocated until the Independent Review was complete. The Independent Review found that £1.8 billion is too much to pay for legacy provision.

Local authorities have seen a substantial increase in their resources for services covered by Supporting People in the last few years. It is a matter for Supporting People teams to manage their budgets and improve value for money.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will not be increasing the grant awards to authorities affected by pipeline funding in 2004–05. Equally where there has been the inevitable slippage in pipeline schemes the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will not be reducing grants to reflect this change in circumstance.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the implications for the Supporting People programme in Gloucestershire of a stand-still budget. [159387]

Yvette Cooper: The recent Independent Review which was carried out on the Supporting People Programme concluded that £1.8 billion was too much to pay for legacy provision. Work is being undertaken, following the recommendations of the Review, to inform the Spending Review 2004 funding decisions.

Future years funding for the programme will be announced once the outcome of the Spending Review 2004 is known.

Administering authorities have been asked to look closely at their costs and services to ensure that better value for money is achieved.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the current budget for Supporting People in Gloucestershire is; and what the projected budget is for each of the next three years. [159388]

Yvette Cooper: The Supporting People budget for Gloucestershire in 2003–04 is £28.1 million and in 2004–05 will be £27.8 million. Future years' funding for the programme will be decided in the Spending Review 2004.

EDUCATION

Free School Meals

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make families whose income is below the £13,230 threshold and who receive working tax credit eligible for free school meals for their children. [160787]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills has no plans to extend the eligibility criteria for free school meals.

Alcohol Education

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to ensure that children are given information in school on the risks of alcohol. [161655]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: There is a statutory requirement for drug education, including alcohol education in the National Curriculum Science Order. This represents the statutory minimum. In addition, schools are expected to use the non-statutory frameworks for Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship at key stages 1 and 2, PSHE at key stages 3 and 4 and the Citizenship programme of study at key stages 3 and 4 as the context for developing drug and alcohol education. We believe drug education in schools has an essential role to play in enabling pupils to develop their knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding about drugs.

Since 1997, we have made over £70 million available to local education authorities to support drug alcohol and tobacco education and prevention in schools. For the last three years, we have supported the development of training packages to support professionals deliver effective drug and alcohol education. From April, we will be supporting up to 3,000 teachers in the PSHE certificate which sets standards in the teaching of drug and alcohol education.

Together with the Home Office and Department of Health, we are supporting a national five-year research programme called "Blueprint" to test the effectiveness of drug education initiatives in schools. It will make a significant contribution to developing a UK evidence base for drug, alcohol and tobacco education.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on programmes explaining the dangers of alcohol misuse in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in each year since 1997. [161068]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The funding that the Department has allocated to local education authorities to support drug education and prevention in all schools in England since 1997 is provided in the following table. This would include education about the effects of alcohol; a statutory requirement at key stages 1–4. We have not directed the proportion of this funding that should be spent on alcohol education or on schools in different sectors.

	£ million
1997–98	5.8
1998–99	6.9
1999–2000	7.4
2000–01	[1]7.4
2001–02	13.1
2002–03	15.2
2003–04	14.3
Total	70.1

[1] Allocated as part of Social Inclusion Grant.

Capital Modernisation Fund

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money was allocated to Buckingham from the Capital Modernisation Fund. [161567]

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money was allocated to Crosby from the Capital Modernisation Fund. [160448]

Mr. Miliband: The Department for Education and Skills does not hold this information centrally. Capital Modernisation Fund is allocated by projects and not by area.

Class Sizes

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools was in each year since 1997. [160476]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The data requested are shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools: average class size[1]—England

Position in January each year

	Primary	*Secondary*
1997	27.5	21.7
1998	27.7	21.7
1999	27.5	21.9
2000	27.1	22.0
2001	26.7	22.0
2002	26.3	21.9
2003	26.3	21.9

[1] Classes taught by one teacher

Source:

Annual Schools' Census

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Crosby were taught in classes of more than 30 on the latest date for which figures are available. [160404]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The data requested are shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools: Classes of more than 30[1]—Crosby parliamentary constituency January 2003

	Number
Primary schools	
Key Stage 1	
Total number of classes	86
Total number of pupils	2,113
Number of classes with more than 30 pupils	0
Number of pupils in classes of more than 30	0
Key Stage 2	
Total number of classes	109
Total number of pupils	3,032
Number of classes with more than 30 pupils	42
Number of pupils in classes of more than 30	1,371

Maintained primary and secondary schools: Classes of more than 30[1]—Crosby parliamentary constituency January 2003

	Number
Secondary schools	
All secondary classes	
Total number of classes	264
Total number of pupils	5,356
Number of classes with more than 30 pupils	22
Number of pupils in classes of more than 30	699

[1] One teacher classes.

Source:

Annual Schools' Census.

Computers

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on computers for schools in Chorley in each of the past seven years. [161558]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department does not collect information on school spend on computers. However funding for information and communications technologies (ICT) in schools is allocated to local education authorities through the Standards Fund and began in 1998–99.

Since 1998–99 schools in Lancashire have benefited from the following funding through the Standards Fund grant for ICT (including match funding from the LEA):

£

	Allocation to Lancashire LEA
1998–99	2,500,000
1999–2000	1,627,867
2000–01	5,576,036
2001–02	6,483,142
2002–03	8,983,493
2003–04	9,169,124

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils per computer there are in schools in Chorley. [161559]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested is not available centrally.

Figures for England, which were derived from a sample of schools, are shown in the table.

Average number of pupils[1] per computer (used solely or mainly for teaching and learning purposes) by type of school—England year end March 2003

	Number of pupils
Maintained primary schools	7.9
Maintained secondary schools	5.4
Maintained special schools	3.0

[1] Full-time equivalent numbers of pupils.

The latest information on ICT in schools was published in Statistical Bulletin "Survey of Information and Communications Technology in Schools 2003", which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* families in Buckingham have benefited from the Computers Within Reach programme. [161569]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Computers within Reach (CWR) scheme closed on 31 October 2001 having delivered over 24,000 recycled computers to people in 22 pilot areas, at a cost of £7.1 million over two years. Those eligible were in receipt of certain working age benefits or a state pension with minimum income guarantee.

At the same time as funding was made available for the Computers within Reach scheme, funding was also provided for the Computers for Teachers programme. For teachers who met certain criteria, this programme subsidised the cost of a computer. It was subsequently replaced by the current Laptops for Teachers scheme which dispensed with subsidies, and through which sufficient funding will be provided to enable two thirds of teachers to receive a laptop by March 2006.

Buckingham was not one of the pilot areas for the CWR scheme.

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on computers for schools in the Burton constituency for each of the last seven years. [161846]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department does not collect information on school spend on computers at constituency level. However Burton is in Staffordshire LEA and since 1998–99 schools in Staffordshire have benefited from the following funding through the Standards Fund grant for ICT (including match funding from the LEA):

Allocation to Staffordshire LEA

	£
1998–99	2,500,000
1999–2000	3,000,000
2000–01	3,000,000
2001–02	4,383,181
2002–03	6,303,997
2003–04	6,257,291

School Building (Sports)

Mr. Doug Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance Partnership for Schools has been given on delivering sports and physical activity resources as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme. [159863]

Mr. Miliband: The Department is currently developing material to assist with the development of the local vision, including how best to deliver sports and physical activity resources, for first wave projects under the Building Schools for the Future programme, which will be shared with Partnership for Schools.

Drinking Water (Schools)

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with the building contractors for the Building Schools for the Future programme on the provision of drinking water in schools; and if he will make a statement. [161356]

Mr. Miliband: No contractors have yet been appointed for the Building Schools for the Future programme but the provision of drinking water will be the subject of design advice to the local contractors.

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* behaviour, *(b)* achievement and *(c)* health of pupils in schools with all-day access to drinking water; and if he will make a statement; [161353]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the uptake of free drinking water in schools when water fountains are placed in *(a)* toilets, *(b)* dining rooms, *(c)* classrooms and *(d)* school corridors; and if he will make a statement. [161358]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills has made no assessments concerning drinking water.

Education Funding (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public money has been spent on repairing schools in Crosby in each year since 1997. [160403]

Mr. Miliband: We do not hold information in the form requested. Capital allocations are now largely made by formulae to local authorities and schools, linked to Asset Management Plans. In addition, all schools have, since 2000–01, received Devolved Formula capital to use on their most urgent capital needs. The following table shows capital funding allocated to Sefton local education authority and its schools since 1997–98.

Capital allocations to Sefton LEA

	Allocation (£000)
1997–98	1,630
1998–99	1,802
1999–2000	4,562
2000–01	9,388
2001–02	11,146
2002–03	15,980
2003–04	16,930

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding each school in Crosby has received from the New Deal for Schools. [160405]

Mr. Miliband: The following table shows the schools in the Crosby constituency that benefited from investment through the New Deal for Schools programme, which commenced in 1997–98. From 2000–01, capital allocations have largely been made by formulae linked to Asset Management Plans. In addition, all schools have, since 2000–01, received Devolved Formula capital to use on their most urgent capital needs.

New Deal for schools—Allocations to schools in the Crosby constituency

	School	Project details	Grant awarded (£)
	Included in LEA wide package:		
1997/98	Sacred Heart Catholic High School	Refit of three science laboratories	[1]836,000
	Range High School	Refit of three science laboratories	
1998/99	Holy Trinity Primary School	Rewiring	55,850
	Holy Trinity Primary School	Heating repairs	44,680
2000/01	Forefield Infant School	Replace temporary classrooms	513,231
	Waterloo Primary School	Replacement of dining room	398,079
	St. Luke's Church of England Primary School	Replace temporary classrooms	605,594
	Forefield Junior School	Replacement of temporary accommodation	393,539

[1] For NDS 1 the £836,000 grant allocated was for Sefton LEA wide projects, part of which was used to refit three science laboratories at each of two schools. The LEA will be able to say how much was allocated to each school.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the percentage change in the science budget in schools has been in Crosby since 2000. [160414]

Mr. Miliband: My Department does not collect this information.

Excellence in Cities Programme

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Buckingham have benefited from the Excellence in Cities Programme; and what the per pupil spending was in each year since the programme's inception. [161584]

Mr. Miliband: No schools in Buckingham itself are in the Excellence in Cities programme as the authority does not meet the inclusion criteria. However, there is an Excellence Cluster in High Wycombe which serves a small pocket of deprivation within the authority. This has been in operation since September 2002.

The average spend per pupil in the High Wycombe cluster was £62.50 in 2002–03 and £106 in 2003–04.

Extended Schools

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make it his policy to enable local education authorities which are experiencing falling school rolls to use surplus capacity to develop *(a)* extended schools under the Government's extended schools programme and *(b)* the co-location of health, social services and parenting support provided by local agencies. [161135]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* Yes, schools can use surplus school places to provide capacity for extended services which can include the co-location of services provided by other agencies such as health, social services and parenting support. Schools are being encouraged to do this.

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made on the implementation of the extended schools programme; and if he will make a statement. [161136]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 15 March 204]:* The Department for Education and Skills has made considerable progress on the implementation of the extended schools programme. The Education Act 2002 includes a new power for school governors to provide family and community services. In October 2002 we issued guidance on setting up extended services along with related guidance on developing child care facilities. 25 LEAs were funded in 2002–03 as pathfinders. The aim of the pathfinders was to test out a variety of approaches used by schools and authorities in the development of family and community facilities and services on school premises. Evaluation findings will be made available shortly.

Over the period 2003–06, the Department for Education and Skills is making funding available to create up to 240 full service extended schools, with at least one in each LEA area. 60 full service extended schools are being created this year. We are also making funding available over the same period for the planning, development and management of extended services in other schools. By 2006 this funding will cover all LEAs.

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what funds he has made available to develop extended schools in Southampton; [161133]

(2) what opportunities there are for Southampton local education authority to bid for funds for extended schools. [161134]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* Southampton LEA will receive £168,480 through the Standards Fund in 2004–05 to develop one full service extended school providing a prescribed core set of services, with further funding available in 2005–06. In addition, £26,000 in 2004–05 and £26,500 in 2005–06 has been allocated to Southampton local authority as part of its general Sure Start Grant for the development of child care services in the full service extended school. The LEA will also receive funding in 2005–06 for the co-ordination and management of extended services in other schools, with additional funding allocated to the authority at the same time to develop child care services in extended schools. There is no bidding process involved in the allocation of extended schools funding.

Failing Schools (Buckinghamshire)

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in Buckinghamshire deemed to be failing since 1997 have since reached satisfactory standards. [161582]

Mr. Miliband: Since January 1997, 11 schools (six primary, four secondary, one special) in Buckinghamshire have been deemed to be failing. Of those, seven recovered sufficiently to have the special measures designation removed, one had a successful Fresh Start, and three closed altogether.

Information and Communications Technology

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been allocated to schools in Buckingham for information and communications technologies in each of the past seven years. [161583]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Funding for information and communications technologies (ICT) in schools is allocated to local education authorities through the Standards Fund and began in 1998–99. Since 1998–99 schools in Buckinghamshire have benefited from the following funding through the Standards Fund grant for ICT (including match funding from the LEA):

£

	Allocation to Buckinghamshire LEA
1998–99	1,250,000
1999–2000	1,125,000
2000–01	1,755,443
2001–02	2,568,797
2002–03	3,646,484
2003–04	3,728,097

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of teachers in Buckingham have received computer training. [161575]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Statistics on teacher training in ICT are not compiled on a constituency basis, but all teachers are expected to be able to use ICT effectively in the classroom. In-service training was largely addressed by the UK-wide National Lottery-funded New Opportunities Fund (NOF) ICT training, which ran between 1999 and 2003, and to which some 96 per cent. of teachers in England signed up.

Training in the effective use of ICT in teaching is also a mandatory part of Teacher Training Institute courses.

Further training opportunities to address teachers' continuing professional development needs (CPD) in embedding ICT in classroom teaching are now being developed across a range of subjects, and teachers are able to buy into this training using Standards Fund monies.

Mathematics/English

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of 11-year-old pupils in Buckingham reached level four in *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* English in each of the past seven years. [161578]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is as follows:

Number and percentage of pupils achieving Level 4+

	Mathematics			*English*		
	Buckingham		*England*	*Buckingham*		*England*
	Number	*Percentage*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Percentage*
2003[1]	883	81	73	839	82	75
2002	824	80	73	849	83	75
2001	886	79	71	942	84	75
2000	832	80	72	866	83	75
1999	749	76	69	777	79	71
1998	663	68	59	748	77	65
1997	686	70	62	731	74	63

[1] Provisional.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of pupils in Buckingham reached the *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* English standard in each of the last seven years. [161580]

Mr. Miliband: The results from the 2003 National Curriculum tests showed that 75 per cent. of 11-year-olds in England reached Level 4 in English and 73 per cent. in mathematics. These results represent a significant improvement in standards—of 12 percentage points in English and 11 percentage points in mathematics—since 1997, reflecting the impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies on primary schools. We remain absolutely committed, through our new Primary Strategy, to supporting schools to achieve the ambitious targets we have set for standards of literacy and numeracy.

The following table shows the number and percentage of pupils in Buckingham who have achieved level 4 or above in the Key Stage 2 English and mathematics tests since 1997. The results for Buckingham are above the national average, with improvements that have been broadly maintained since 2000:

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Number of pupils							
English[1]	731	748	777	866	942	849	893
Mathematics[1]	686	663	749	832	886	824	883
Percentage of pupils							
English	74	77	79	83	84	83	82
Mathematics	70	68	76	80	79	80	81

[1] The number of eligible pupils for the Key Stage 2 tests varies slightly from year-to-year.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of pupils in Chorley reached the *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* English standard in each of the last seven years. [161600]

Mr. Miliband: The results from the 2003 National Curriculum tests showed that 75 per cent. of 11-year-olds in England reached Level 4 in English and 73 per cent. in mathematics. These results represent a significant improvement in standards—of 12 percentage points in English and 11 percentage points in mathematics—since 1997, reflecting the impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies on primary schools. We remain absolutely committed, through our new Primary Strategy, to supporting schools to achieve the ambitious targets we have set for standards of literacy and numeracy.

The following table shows the number and percentage of pupils in Chorley who have achieved level 4 or above in the Key Stage 2 English and mathematics tests since 1997. The results for Chorley are above the national average, and show a considerable improvement since 1997:

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Number of pupils							
English	920	953	1,024	1,017	1,106	1,086	1,098
Mathematics	951	882	1,048	1,021	1,059	1,077	1,049
Percentage of pupils							
English	71	74	78	78	77	81	80
Mathematics	73	68	80	78	74	80	77

Note:
The number of eligible pupils for the Key Stage 2 tests varies slightly from year-to-year.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 11-year-old pupils in Chorley reached level 4 in *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* English in each of the past seven years. [161601]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is as follows:

Percentage of pupils achieving Level 4+

	Mathematics		*English*	
	Chorley	*England*	*Chorley*	*England*
2003[1]	77	73	80	75
2002	80	73	81	75
2001	74	71	77	75
2000	78	72	78	75
1999	80	69	78	71
1998	68	59	74	65
1997	73	62	71	63

[1] Provisional.

Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have been removed from parents on the basis of a diagnosis of myalgic encephalomyelitis in children for which parents have been classed as having Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy; and if he will make a statement. [160650]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* The information requested is not held centrally.

National Childcare Strategy

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many children in Buckingham have gained from the National Childcare Strategy; and if he will make a statement; [161311]

(2) how many child care places have been created in Buckingham since 1997. [161563]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the number of new child care places created in an individual constituency is available only from 1999. Buckinghamshire local authority reported that between April 1999 and December 2003, 1,166 new child care places opened in Buckingham constituency. A place typically helps more than one child, as not all children take up places full-time, and we estimate these places will help some 2,200 children. During the same period, Buckinghamshire reported that 100 child care places closed in Buckingham, so that the stock of child care places rose by 1,066.

New Deal for Schools

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding each school in Buckingham has received from the New Deal for Schools. [161585]

Mr. Miliband: The table shows the schools in the Buckingham constituency that benefited from investment through the New Deal for Schools (NDS) programme, which commenced in 1997–98. From 2000–01, capital allocations to local authorities and schools have largely been made by formulae linked to Asset Management Plans. In addition, all schools have, since 2000–01, received Devolved Formula capital to use on their most urgent capital needs.

NDS allocations to schools in the Buckingham constituency

	School	*Project details*	*Grant awarded (£)*
1997/98	East Claydon School	Building repairs	[1]564,000
	Grendon Underwood Combined School	Building repairs	[1]564,000
1998/99	Akeley C of E infant School	Replacement of 20-year-old boiler plant	23,000
2000/01	Haddenham Community Junior School	Re-roofing	138,000
	Long Crendon School	Replacement curtain walling to link block	92,000

[1] For NDS 1 the £564,000 grant allocated was for Buckinghamshire local education authority (LEA) wide projects, part of which was used for building repairs at each of two schools in the Buckingham constituency. The LEA will be able to say how much was allocated to each school.

Qualified Teacher Status

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the availability of qualified teacher status training for Welsh residents in English teacher training colleges located close to the Welsh border. [161760]

Mr. Miliband: In 2004/05, 35,800 places on courses of initial teacher training will be available at institutions located in England, more than at any time since the 1980s. This has allowed the number of places allocated to providers in the three Government Office Regions which border Wales to grow from 12,700 in the current year to 13,337 in 2004/05. Students from Wales who take up places on a Postgraduate Certificate in Education course in England are eligible to receive a £6,000 training bursary from the Government on the same basis as those who are normally resident in England.

Random Drug Testing

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether all schools are subject to random drug testing; [157803]

(2) whether parental permission for random drug testing will be a requirement before a child can obtain a place in a *(a)* junior and *(b)* secondary school; [157808]

(3) what estimate he has made of the costs incurred by schools in obtaining parental permission for random drug testing; [157811]

(4) whether random drug testing in schools includes *(a)* pupils, *(b)* teachers, *(c)* classroom assistants, *(d)* supply teachers, *(e)* school grounds staff, *(f)* maintenance staff and *(g)* kitchen staff; [157816]

(5) whether a child can be expelled if parental permission for random drug testing is not granted; [157813]

(6) whether random drug testing will take place in *(a)* primary schools, *(b)* secondary schools, *(c)* breakfast school clubs and *(d)* after-school clubs; [157815]

(7) who will carry out the random drug tests in schools. [157817]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: "Drugs: Guidance to Schools" will be sent to all schools this month. The guidance highlights the option for schools to employ drug testing. The guidance applies to all maintained schools and pupil referral units in England. It is for headteachers to decide whether to employ drug testing—random or not.

A school's governing body decides on its behaviour policy. The head teacher has discretion to exclude pupils in response to serious breaches of this policy, taking individual circumstances into account.

Local education authorities and school governing bodies are responsible for deciding local school admission arrangements, but cannot make admission dependent on parents signing any form of parental declaration, which would include parental permission for random drug testing. Parental permission could form part of a home- school agreement between parents and schools. Home-school agreements cannot be made a condition of entry to any maintained school. Procedures on testing and sanctions should be contained in the school's drug policy and be developed through wide consultation with members of the school community.

Any costs of obtaining parental permission will of course depend on the decisions of individual heads as to how often, how and when to seek such permissions. For example if done through an existing system such as existing home-school contracts the costs will be close to zero. If a separate exercise were undertaken the costs would be likely to be higher. These will be matters for heads to consider in the light of their local circumstances.

It will be for schools to decide on the scope of drug testing taking into account the school's drug policy and the employment contracts of those working in the school. A school's drug policy should make clear to which activities the policy applies, including after school and out of school activities, and the scope of any drug testing strategy contained in the policy.

In cases where the carrying out of drug testing is considered appropriate, it will be for schools to decide how and by whom this should be done.

School Repairs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on repairing schools in Buckingham in each year since 1997. [161310]

Mr. Miliband: The following table shows capital funding allocated to Buckinghamshire local education authority (LEA) and its schools since 1997–98. The majority of capital funding is now allocated by formulae, linked to Asset Management Plans. In addition, all schools have, since 2000–01, received Devolved Formula capital to use on their most urgent capital needs.

Capital allocations to Buckinghamshire LEA

	Allocation (£000)
1997–98	5,493
1998–99	8,068
1999–2000	11,947
2000–01	19,422
2001–02	11,510
2002–03	16,981
2003–04	27,460

Note:
The above allocations include the Voluntary Aided sector.

School Sports Facilities

Jim Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his Department is doing to ensure that the timescales for Private Finance Initiative school developments allow time for consideration of community use of sports facilities. [160938]

Mr. Miliband: PFI contracts are usually between the local authority and a private contractor. It is therefore for the authority to ensure that negotiations include the use of sports facilities by community groups. My Department does not have a direct role in the negotiations themselves. The authority's Outline Business Case, which requires approval by the Treasury-chaired Project Review Group, must include a timetable which allows sufficient time for the consideration of key issues such as the community use of facilities. Projects which involve community use are encouraged; not only does the community benefit, but the annual fee payable by the local authority may be reduced, in recognition of the revenue that is generated by the facilities.

PFI projects provide high quality teaching accommodation along with excellent sports facilities which are a significant asset to the local community.

Jim Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the success of extended schools in opening up schools sports facilities for use by the general public; and if he will make a statement. [160929]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The roll out of extended schools across the country began in 2003, so no specific assessment has yet been made. We are, however, funding the development of full service extended schools, which will offer a prescribed core set of services for pupils, families and the wider community, including sports and arts facilities. By 2006 every LEA in England will be given funding to create at least one school. The development of these schools will be evaluated, and among the main aims of the study will be to assess the impact on indicators such as sport, health and youth crime.

Jim Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will take steps to ensure that, in pricing access to educational establishments' sports and leisure facilities, local education authorities budget for long-term costs, including replacement costs. [161213]

Mr. Miliband: The pricing of access to sports facilities at educational establishments is a matter for local decision.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been invested in sports halls in schools in Chorley in each year since 1996, broken down by school. [161560]

Mr. Miliband: The Department does not hold information on how much has been spent on sports halls. Schools premises investment decisions are based on local education authority asset management planning processes and this information should therefore be available locally.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the effects on schools of changes in the level of investment in school sports in Buckingham since 1997. [161562]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Government are investing more than £1 billion in England to transform physical education (PE), school sport and club links. The funding will help deliver an ambitious Public Service Agreement target, shared with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, to increase the percentage of 5–16 year olds who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006.

Spearheading delivery are School Sport Partnerships, which provide for groups of schools to work together to increase sports opportunities for all young people. Latest research, published by the Departments on 4 March shows that 68 per cent. of pupils in schools that have been in a Partnership for three years, are taking up the two hour entitlement, rising to 90 per cent. at Key Stage 3. Data are currently being collected from remaining Partnerships and will be published in April. Disaggregated results will be available at that time.

Significant funding is also being provided to specifically enhance PE and school sport facilities, with £2,599,000 being allocated from the New Opportunities Fund to schools in the Buckinghamshire LEA area.

School Year (Tourism)

Jim Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if his Department will issue guidance to local education authorities on the economic impact on tourism of adopting a six-term school year. [161214]

Mr. Miliband: Proposals for a standard six-term school year have been developed by an Independent Commission on the School Year which was established by the Local Government Association. The commission included representation from the tourism industry. My right hon. Friend sees merit in the argument for standardising the length of school terms. Decisions on school term dates and holidays however continue to be the responsibility of individual local education authorities or school governing bodies, depending on the category of school.

Schools (Lockers)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of schools in England provide full locker facilities for all pupils attending school. [161380]

Mr. Miliband: The Department does not have these figures, nor figures for other types of personal storage in schools. However, the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 require that the buildings provided for a school shall be adequate to allow for the storing and drying of pupils' outdoor clothing, and for the storing of their other belongings. Local education authorities are responsible for ensuring that the premises of maintained schools conform to these regulations.

Schools Science Budgets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the percentage change in the science budget in schools has been in Buckingham in each year since 1997. [161581]

Mr. Miliband: My Department does not collect this information.

Sixth Forms

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the procedure for closing a school sixth form; whether such a decision is accountable to the whole local education authority; and whether there is a statutory appeal process. [160926]

Mr. Miliband: Proposals to close a school sixth form may be published by the LEA or Governing Body depending on the category of school. Proposals to close a school sixth form after two poor Ofsted reports may also be published by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). For both types of proposals the five stages in the process are consultation; publication; a six week representation period (one month in the case of LSC proposals); decision and implementation. LEAs may determine their own proposals to close schools sixth forms provided there are no objections to the proposals. Where there are objections—including from the school concerned—proposals fall to be considered by the School Organisation Committee (SOC) or schools adjudicator if the SOC cannot reach a unanimous decision. LEAs and LSCs are represented on SOCs along with other key groups.

As part of a reorganisation of 16–19 provision, the LSC can also publish a proposal to close a school sixth form following recommendations in an Ofsted Area Inspection report, or where they can demonstrate that the proposals will improve participation, raise standards or broaden the range of provision. The steps in this process are to publish a preliminary notice and consult for at least two months; publish formal proposals with a further two-month objections period; and submit the proposals to the Secretary of State one month later for a decision.

Neither the SOC nor the school adjudicator is accountable to the LEA. Apart from judicial review, there is no statutory appeals process following decisions by the SOC, the adjudicator or Secretary of State.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the procedure for opening a new school sixth form; and whether such a decision is made by the local education authority. [161388]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Proposals to open a new school sixth form may be published by the LEA, or the Governing Body of the school. The five stages in the process are consultation; publication; a six week representation period; decision and implementation. LEAs may determine their own proposals to open school sixth forms provided there are no objections to the proposals. All other proposals are determined by the School Organisation Committee (SOC) or schools adjudicator if the SOC cannot reach a unanimous decision.

As part of a reorganisation of 16–19 provision, the LSC can also publish proposals to open a school sixth form following recommendations of an Ofsted area inspection report or where they can demonstrate that the proposals will improve participation, raise standards or broaden the range of provision. The steps in this process are to publish a preliminary notice and consult for at least two months; publish formal proposals with a further two-month objections and comments period; and submit the proposals to the Secretary of State one month later for a decision.

Teacher Numbers/Vacancies

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary school and *(b)* secondary school teachers there were per pupil of the relevant age-group in each year since 1997. [160478]

Mr. Miliband: The data requested are shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools: pupil:teacher ratios—England

	Position in January each year	
	Primary	*Secondary*
1997	23.4	16.7
1998	23.7	16.9
1999	23.5	17.0
2000	23.3	17.2
2001	22.9	17.1
2002	22.5	16.9
2003	22.6	17.0

Source:
Annual Schools' Census.

The underlying pupil and teacher figures were published on 25 September 2003 in the statistical volume, "Statistics of Education, Schools in England 2003", a copy of which has been placed in the Library. The table is also available on the statistics section of the DfES website at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000417/index.shtml

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teacher vacancies there were in Chorley on the latest date for which figures are available; and what steps he is taking to reduce them. [161451]

Mr. Miliband: The information is not available in the form requested. In January 2003, there were 40 vacancies for full-time teachers in maintained schools in the Lancashire local education authority (LEA) area, which includes Chorley.

Like other areas, since 1997 Chorley has benefited from the initiatives that the Government have put in place to recruit and retain teachers and to increase the number of staff supporting them in schools. Since 1997, the number of full-time equivalent regular teachers in maintained schools in the former Lancashire LEA area has risen by 390, from 11,870 to 12,260 in 2003. Over the same period, the number of full-time equivalent school support staff in the area has grown by 2,870 from 3,620 to 6,490 in 2003.

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff the Department employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Department paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158252]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The following table gives the figures for the past three financial years since the Department for Education and Skills was established in 2001.

The significant increase in 2002–2003 was largely due to the implementation of a new range of policy development in Schools Directorate and the general establishment of the new Department.

	Number of agency staff	*Financial year*	*Agency spend of the financial year (£)*	*Percentage of total staffing budget*
2002	1,614	June 2001 to March 2002[1]	1,780,629.70	1.46
2003	1,746	April 2002 to March 2003	2,688,149.33	2.12
2004	117 (Jan.)	April 2003 to January 2004	1,456,921.04	1.12

[1] DfES was created following Machinery of Government changes in June 2001.

University Bursaries

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which universities have indicated that they will commence bursary schemes from 2006–07 for students from families with incomes *(a)* between £15,970 and £22,270 and *(b)* between £22,270 and £33,533; and how much money is being given in each case. [161436]

Alan Johnson: I am placing today in the Library a copy of a letter from Universities UK to me, which outlines these details as currently known. Individual universities are responsible for their own bursary schemes.

Websites

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost in *(a)* financial and *(b)* other terms was in (i) each financial year since 1997

and (ii) 2003–04 until the latest date for which figures are available of (A) developing and (B) maintaining (1) his Department's website and (2) each website for which his Department is responsible; and how many (C) unique hosts and (D) hits there were in each month for each website in (iii) each financial year since 1997 and (iv) 2003–04 until the latest date for which numbers are available. [155850]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested is as follows.

(a) (A and B; 1 and 2) Core programme costs, for developing and maintaining the Department for Education and Skills central website www.dfes.gov.uk and the other sites it is responsible (our six customer portals and Curriculum Online (from 2003)) are as follows:

	Central website www.dfes.gov.uk [1]	*Customer facing portals (six sites)*	*Curriculum online www.curriculumonline.gov.uk*
1997–98	43,200	—	—
1998–99	84,200	—	—
1999–2000	140,300	—	—
2000–01	266,600	—	—
2001–02	654,800	—	—
2002–03	1,747,000	—	2,753,875
2003–04	1,900,000	978,000	2,394,598

[1] From 2002 costs include hosting for other online services provided by the Department Figures for agencies and non-departmental public bodies are not included as collection of this information represents disproportionate costs.

(b) We have assumed that cost in 'other terms' refers to staff overheads. Collection of this information represents a disproportionate cost.

(C) Unique hosts—We have considered this to mean the number of 'hosting services' (virtual and dedicated) that we are contracted to use. We are contracted with one supplier.

(D) (iii and iv)—Our site traffic figures are collected according the standards laid down in the Office of the e-Envoy's Guidelines for UK Government Websites which recommends that web teams should give more importance to unique visitors and page impressions than to hits.

Historical figures are only available for 2000 onwards Site traffic figures are as follows:

	2001	*2002*	*2003*
DfES: www.dfes.gov.uk			
Visits		5,479,049	13,037,249
Unique visitors	1,293,000	1,148,743	4,189,925
Page impressions	43,700,000	74,491,274	160,164,079

	2003
Customer portals	
Visits	4,390,139
Unique visitors	1,572,963
Page impressions	53,744,094

	2003
Curriculum online: www.curriculumonline.gov.uk	
Visits	495,408
Unique visitors	429,804
Page impressions	4,100,100

Youth Services (Funding)

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to centralise funding for services for young people. [161101]

Margaret Hodge: The response to the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' consultation sets out our aims for funding services for young people. We intend to rationalise funding streams and grant programmes at local level in order to avoid duplication. As Children's Trusts become operational this will involve the pooling of appropriate budgets.

HEALTH

Ashford (Middlesex) Hospital

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* intensive care beds, *(b)* high dependence beds, *(c)* medical beds and *(d)* acute surgery beds there were at Ashford (Middlesex) Hospital on 31 December of each year from 1997. [160368]

Mr. Hutton: Information on beds is collected on a trust basis from national health service organisations. Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust (RTK) opened in April 1998.

Information on critical care beds is collected at two census points during the year. The number of intensive care and high dependency beds on the census day for Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Number of critical care beds on census day, Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust

Census date	*Intensive care*	*High dependency*	*Total*
31 March 1999	10	0	10
30 September 1999	10	0	10
15 January 2000	10	0	10
14 July 2000	7	3	10
15 January 2001	8	9	17
16 July 2001	7	9	16
15 January 2002	7	9	16
16 July 2002	8	9	17
15 January 2003	7	9	16
16 July 2003	8	9	17
15 January 2004	7	9	16

Source:
Department of Health form KH03a.

Information on beds is collected annually. The average daily number of available beds for Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Average daily number of available beds, by sector, Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust, 1997–98 to 2002–03

	All specialties (excluding day only)	*General and Acute*	*Acute*	*Geriatric*	*Mental illness*	*Learning disability*	*Maternity*	*Day only*
1997–98	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1998–99	612	549	549	0	0	0	63	43
1999–2000	612	549	549	0	0	0	63	46
2000–01	633	571	571	0	0	0	63	46
2001–02	667	604	604	0	0	0	63	46
2002–03	620	560	560	0	0	0	60	58

Source:
Department of Health form KH03.

Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out the *(a)* statutory and *(b)* regulatory requirements to consult placed upon the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection; and how the Commission will discharge its duty to consult in respect of the inclusion or exclusion of performance indicators from the star rating system. [158638]

Ms Rosie Winterton: With respect to its annual reviews of English national health service bodies and cross-border strategic health authorities there is no statutory duty on the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection (CHAI) to consult in relation to the criteria it devises under section 50 of the Act. However, we anticipate that CHAI will consult NHS bodies in relation to those criteria, continuing the current practice of the Commission for Health Improvement.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State will respond to the letter of 4 February from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire. [161658]

Dr. Ladyman: A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 15 March 2004.

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will reply to the letter to him from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 12 February with regard to Dr. Lieberman. [161803]

Dr. John Reid: A reply was sent to my right hon. Friend on 4 March 2004.

Delayed Discharges

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients had their hospital discharge delayed while awaiting community care packages in each year since 1997. [160513]

Dr. Ladyman: Data on delayed discharges are not collected on the basis of awaiting community care services. All available information on delayed transfers of care since 1997 is available in the Library, including the latest figures for 2003–04, Quarter 3 (December 2003).

Dentistry

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to simplify dental fee scales. [161308]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government are committed to rebuilding and restoring national health service dentistry to improve oral health. New legislation in the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 will underpin a modernised, high-quality primary dental service, properly integrated with the rest of the NHS. The aim is to deliver better access to services, better working lives for dentists and their teams, better oral health and an improved patient experience.

Under the proposals in the Act, primary care trusts (PCTs) will assume responsibility for providing primary care dental services. With these responsibilities will go the financial resources held centrally, which currently amount to £1.2 billion.

As part of the new arrangements, the current remuneration system, which is based on item-of-service fees, will be abolished and replaced by a much simpler contract. Under transitional arrangements we are developing a simple but robust 'base contract' which all dentists and PCTs will be able to put in place from 2005. These transitional arrangements will provide protection of dentists gross earnings for three years to enable them to come off the treadmill of item of service fees, to see their patients at intervals appropriate to their oral health needs and to modernise and adjust their workload. These proposals are set out in "Framework proposals for primary dental services in England from 2005", which was published on 24 February and on which we are currently seeking views from dental representative bodies.

Mr. Watts: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action the Government is taking to increase the number of NHS dentists. [158182]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have undertaken a review of the dental primary care workforce in consultation with representatives of the dental profession—professional bodies, dental academics, as well as the British Dental Association (BDA). The matters under consideration included the age structure of the dental profession, the increasing number of women dentists, our commitment to develop team-working in dentistry, and the impact of our reforms to the contractual and remuneration arrangements which are intended to make National Health Service dentistry more attractive to dental practices. We intend to publish the report shortly.

We have also worked closely with the BDA to draw up proposals for a new contract from April 2005, which will remove the treadmill of item of service. This links with the new duties primary care trusts (PCTs) will have from April 2005 to secure the provision of primary

dental care services. With these new responsibilities will go the financial resources currently held centrally, which by 2005–06 are expected to total nearly £1.5 billion.

These proposals, in the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 in relation to primary dental services, represent the most radical reform of NHS dentistry since 1948. They will give a better deal for patients, for dentists and for the NHS and should lead to an increase in the number of NHS dentists.

In the meantime we have provided new investment totalling £90 million to NHS dentistry over the last year. This is aimed at increasing the number of NHS dentists and increasing access to NHS dentistry for patients. £59 million will support access, and strategic health authorities have been advised of their shares and are working with their PCTs to address access issues. £30 million is to support information technology and the balance of £1 million will support organisational development locally.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answers of 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 800W and 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 399W, on dentists, what the reasons are for the difference in the total number of NHS dentists and the number of dentists accepting children within some strategic health authorities. [158497]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information on dentist numbers given in the reply of 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 399W, covered the numbers of principal and assistant dentists. These are dentists in the general dental service (GDS) at September 2003. These figures exclude groups of national health service dentists: vocational dental practitioners in the GDS; salaried dentists in the GDS, dentists in the personal dental service and dentists in the community dental service.

The source of the information in that reply is the Dental Practice Board. Information on which dentists are taking NHS patients is held on the NHS.UK website at www.nhs.uk. The information on that website is provided by primary care trusts. The information will cover all NHS dental providers; not just principals and assistants in the GDS. The information given in the reply of 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 800W, was for the situation on Thursday 4 December. The figures counted dentists in surgeries which were taking new NHS patients.

Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what funding has been set aside for research into Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy; [159977]

(2) if he will make a statement on the research into possible treatments for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. [159976]

Dr. Ladyman: The Genetics White Paper announced investment of up to £3 million to support gene therapy research on single gene disorders. Bids from researchers to access these funds have been received, but are treated in confidence. The specific clinical conditions to be addressed through the funding for research will depend on what bids have been submitted by the research community and how the individual bids stand up to rigorous assessment through peer review.

The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). It is a long-standing and important principle of successive Governments that they do not prescribe the detail of how individual research councils should distribute their resources between competing priorities. In 2001–02, the MRC spent about £2 million on research into Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy.

EU Accession States (Medical Training)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in what circumstances citizens of the 10 EU accession countries will have rights to medical treatment in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* other EU countries; and if he will make a statement. [156721]

Mr. Hutton: From 1 May 2004, residents of the new accession countries will be covered by Regulations (EEC) 1408/71 and 574/72, which co-ordinate the social security and health care schemes of the member states of the European Economic Area. Like the insured populations of the existing member states, they will then be entitled to receive treatment the need for which arises during a temporary visit to any other member state, including the United Kingdom, under the E111 arrangements. They will be able to travel specifically to receive treatment in other member states of the European Economic Area for pre-existing conditions only if their home country authorises them to do so by issuing a Form E112. The home country will bear the costs of treatments provided in any other member state. including the United Kingdom, through the E111 or E112 arrangements.

Citizens of the new member states who become ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom will be able to access NHS care on the same basis as any person currently resident in the United Kingdom. But for those who fall into the categories covered by Regulations 1408/71 and 574/72—for example, certain retirement pensioners or students—National Health Service costs will be paid by the person's home state. Accession state citizens resident in the United Kingdom will be entitled to E111s or E112s for medical treatment while temporarily visiting other member states on the same terms as any other UK resident.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when *(a)* citizens of EU accession states working in the UK and *(b)* their children will qualify to receive free of charge NHS services and facilities. [157002]

Mr. Hutton: All persons legally working in the United Kingdom, and their family members, are entitled to immediate access to national health service services on the same terms as any person ordinarily resident in the UK. From 1 May 2004, this will apply equally to persons from the European Union accession states, who will have free access to the UK labour market subject to a registration system.

General Practitioners

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what financial help is available from the Government to assist general practitioner practices in the purchase of telephone systems; [160329]

(2) if he will issue guidance to general practitioner practices on the use of premium rate numbers by which patients call to obtain appointments and services; [160330]

(3) what estimate he has made of the number of general practitioner practices within the NHS which use premium rate telephone numbers by which patients call to obtain appointments and services. [160331]

Mr. Hutton: Discretionary funding is available from primary care trusts to enable general practitioners to update their telephone systems. Otherwise the cost of installing and running telephony are an expense which the practice—like all other businesses—covers from overall practice income. The Department holds no information on the extent to which premium rate numbers are used in general practice, and has no plans to collect such data or to publish guidance.

Hospices

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will increase financial assistance from the NHS to children's hospices in England. [157909]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Funding is available for children's hospices from national health service primary care trusts. The level of funding is a matter for local discussion. Voluntary healthcare providers, such as hospices, are viewed as important in these negotiations.

Hospital Construction (Lichfield)

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when construction will commence on the new hospital at the St. Michael's site in Lichfield; and if he will make a statement; [160789]

(2) how many car parking spaces will be made available to *(a)* staff and *(b)* visitors at the St. Michael's site in Lichfield once the construction of the new hospital is completed; [160790]

(3) how many square metres have been set aside for future expansion of the new hospital at the St. Michael's site in Lichfield once it is completed. [160791]

Dr. Ladyman: Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic Health Authority expects construction of the new hospital to start during the summer of this year.

There will be a total of 217 car parking spaces. Of these, 58 will be specifically for staff and patients using mental health services. There will be an additional 117 public car parking spaces, and 42 reserved for staff.

1,400 square metres have been identified for expansion, plus a further 65 parking spaces.

Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what powers the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has to obtain data from clinical trials conducted outside the United Kingdom. [158525]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There is an obligation on companies making an application for a marketing authorisation to provide the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) with all relevant information at the time of the application; this includes data from clinical trials conducted outside the United Kingdom.

For marketed drugs, the marketing authorisation holder's "qualified person", who is responsible for their pharmacovigilance system, has an obligation to inform the MHRA of any information relevant to the evaluation of the risks and benefits of the product, including post-authorisation studies conducted outside the UK. In addition, the holder must report serious suspected adverse reactions relating to the product which occur in the UK and serious unexpected suspected adverse drug reactions which occur in a country outside the European Union, and provide periodic safety update reports to the MHRA, which should include any relevant data from clinical trials outside the UK.

Sponsors of clinical trials conducted in the UK have an obligation to submit adverse drug reactions (ADRs) to the MHRA on an ongoing basis and to provide end of trial study results in a report. Under the Clinical Trials Directive, to be implemented in the UK as of 1 May 2004, sponsors of trials conducted in the UK will have an obligation to report serious unexpected suspected adverse drug reactions to the MHRA, even if those reactions occur at trial sites outside the UK. In addition, they will be required to provide an annual safety report, which must include all serious suspected adverse reactions occurring in the course of the trial.

The implementation of the Clinical Trials Directive into UK legislation will provide a statutory basis for inspections of clinical trials to ensure compliance with the requirements of good clinical practice. This will also include an opportunity for inspectors to visit sites outside the EU member states where necessary. A reciprocal arrangement exists within the EU.

Mental Health

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action his Department is taking to support Mental Health Action Week. [160119]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department welcomes this annual initiative which aims to raise awareness of mental health issues among the general public. The Department is continuing to work in partnership with the voluntary sector, including the Mental Health Foundation, to provide better information about mental health issues, challenge the stigma and discrimination often associated with mental ill health and build better understanding among the general public.

General Practitioners

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the National Patient Safety Agency. [160606]

Mr. Hutton: The effectiveness of the National Patient Safety Agency is kept under regular review as part of the annual ministerial accountability review process.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of the National Patient Safety Agency was in each year for which figures are available; and how many staff it employed in each year, broken down by *(a)* whole-time equivalent and *(b)* headcount. [160607]

Mr. Hutton: The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) was created as a special health authority in July 2001 and has published accounts for 2001–02 and 2002–03.

The annual costs of the NPSA and number of employees are shown in the table.

	Programme costs £ million	*Whole time equivalent number of staff*	*Headcount*
2001–02	1.763	5	6
2002–03	11.666	59	60

NHS (Complaints)

Mr. Hurst: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many formal complaints were made by members of the public to the national health service in each year from 1990 to 2002. [156015]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data prior to 1996–97 are available in the publication 'Handling complaints: monitoring the NHS complaints procedures—England', copies of which are available in the Library.

Data on national health service complaints for years from 1996–97 to 2000–01 are available on the website: http://www.performance.doh.gov.uk/nhscomplaints/ Data for 2002–03 are available on the website: http://www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/. As a result of structural changes in the NHS, the data for 2001–02 are incomplete and have not been published, although data from those organisations that submitted returns are available on request.

NHS Budgets

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the £100 million growth package referred to in his Department's press release of 4 March 2004 is being spent. [160346]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A capital growth scheme was launched in January 2004, which gives financial rewards to trusts providing better and faster access to emergency care. Trusts that deliver real, significant and sustained improvements will be able to access extra money to help them to carry on improving their services and facilities.

Details of the scheme are as follows:

Acute national health service trusts can access a flat payment of up to £500,000 for faster progress to meeting the minimum operating standard of treating 98 per cent. of patients in accident and emergency departments within four hours;

Ambulance services can access up to an average of £250,000 (payment weighted by size of trust) for responding to 75 per cent. of category A calls within eight minutes for three consecutive months;

Mental health trusts which improve crisis access to mental health services will be able to access a flat £200,000 one-off payment.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 548W, on NHS budgets, what the £37 million will be spent on. [160456]

Mr. Hutton: £35.6 million of the estimated balance of £37 million has now been formally allocated to primary care trusts. Details are shown in the following table:

Centrally funded initiatives and services and special allocations Budget

	Allocations made since 6 February 2004 (£)
ABC Project (Invest to Save)	50,000
Audiology Services	804,000
Cancer Network Support	426,000
Choice Programme	32,000
Commercial Director Feasibility Analysis	388,000
Dangerous People with Severe Personality Disorders	3,000
Distinction Awards	718,000
Drug Market Response Group (Invest to Save)	413,000
E-Harp (Invest to Save)	22,000
Equality and Ethnic Minority Health	110,000
Flu Vaccination Programme	12,780,000
GP Recruitment and Retention	199,000
High Security Psychiatric Services Central Element	450,000
National Clinical Governance Support Team	1,170,000
National Institute of Mental Health	40,000
Neo-Natal Intensive Care National Audit	200,000
NHS Counter Fraud and Security Management Service	22,000
NHS Pay Modernisation	1,445,000
Older People in the Community (Invest to Save)	116,000
Palliative Care	74,000
Premises Improvements	741,000
Prescribing training for Nurses, Pharmacists and other Health Professionals	10,000
Revascularisation	10,000
Schedule 5—Programme Budgeting	3,000
Securing Recombinant Clotting Factors	11,890,000
Service Improvement Teams	2,880,000
Strategic Management and Support	1,804,000
Waiting lists—Booked Admissions	450,000
Youth Services in Basset Law	52,000
Total	35,602,000

NHS Treatment (Accession Citizens)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate the Government has made of how many EU accession country citizens will make use of the NHS. [157352]

Mr. Hutton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Westbury (Dr. Murrison) on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 279W.

NHS Treatment

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people sought medical assistance through the NHS between 1997 and 2003. [160923]

Mr. Hutton: The tables show the number of patients admitting or starting a consultation in the following situations:

General practitioner consultations,

Walk-in-centre visits,

Calls to NHS Direct,

New attendances at accident and emergency,

First outpatient attendances,

Day case and overnight hospital admissions.

These figures relate to the number of attendances or admissions and are not a count of the number of people—some patients may be admitted or attend a consultation on more than one occasion.

Estimated total GP consultations[1,2]

	All GP consultations (Million)
1996	254
1997	—
1998	217
1999	—
2000	220
2001	217

[1] The population data used to calculate the estimated total numbers of consultations are revised mid year estimates from the ONS as at 27 February 2003. These figures are based on the 2001 census.
[2] Consultation estimates are not available for 1997 and 1999.

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest million.

Source:
ONS General Household Survey and Mid year population estimates from the 2001 census.

Contact with the NHS

Thousand

	Calls to NHS direct[1]	*Total visits to NHS walk-in centres*[2,3]	*New attendances at A and E/minor injury units*[4]	*First out-patient attendances*[4]	*Day case admissions*[5,6]	*Overnight hospital admissions*[5,6]
1996–97	—	—	12,484	11,294	2,623	1,749
1997–98	—	—	12,794	11,529	2,765	1,695
1998–99	110	—	12,811	11,778	3,122	1,756
1999–2000	1,650	—	13,167	12,136	3,212	1,730
2000–01	3,420	574	12,953	12,466	3,337	1,719
2001–02	5,213	1,144	12,853	12,714	3,411	1,680
2002–03	6,319	1,373	12,945	13,032	3,618	1,702

[3] Figures are partially estimated.
Sources:
[1] Health Intelligence Unit, NHS Direct.
[2] Walk-in centre activity reports.
[4] KH09.
[5] SaFFR. Data relates to General and Acute Specialities only, First Finished Consultant Episodes only.
[6] Day case and over night admissions: Earlier SaFFR figures are from health authorities. With the abolition of health authorities, figures for 2001–02 and 2002–03 are based on returns from NHS trusts

Nursing Home Costs

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what financial contribution was provided by each local authority in England towards the cost of nursing home provision in each of the last five years. [161055]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the gross expenditure on nursing care placements as reported by each council with social services responsibilities in England from 1998–99 to 2002–03, has been placed in the Library.

Osteoporosis

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the value of primary prevention of osteoporotic fracture. [158867]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government acknowledges the importance and value of primary prevention of osteoporotic fracture. That is why the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has accepted the appraisal committee's recommendation to address the prevention of fractures in post-menopausal women who have not yet had a fracture through their technology appraisal for the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis. This will inform recommendations on the clinical and cost effectiveness of treatments for primary prevention.

NICE is also developing a clinical guideline to look at the assessment of fracture risk and the prevention of osteoporotic fractures in individuals at high risk. It will examine both interventions used to prevent an initial fracture and those used to prevent fractures where one has already occurred.

Out-of-hours Provision

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has for the ambulance service to play a role in the provision of out-of-hours emergency care. [160661]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Where general practitioners opt out, primary care trusts (PCTs) will be able to consider a range of alternative providers; for example: NHS Direct, ambulance services, national health service walk-in centres, GP co-operatives or their successor organisations, paramedics and deputising services.

This will allow the PCTs to plan and commission innovative and integrated services focusing on the most appropriate provider for the range of care required with an enhanced focus on the use of triage and skill-mix. The service is likely to be less reliant on doctors and make more use of nurses and others such as ambulance staff. Through this approach a flexible, more responsive service can be developed with staff trained to provide a range of interventions. This will provide a better service for patients.

Self-harm/Suicide (Young People)

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures are being implemented under the National Suicide Prevention Strategy to reduce instances of self-harm in young people. [161081]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence is currently preparing guidelines for the management of self-harm in accident and emergency departments. This includes the services provided to children and young people. Once published, the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) will support local services in establishing procedures and services for people presenting at accident and emergency with self-harm.

A risk assessment training package (STORM) focusing on self-harm is being piloted in two areas and in five prisons.

NIMHE is supporting local mental health services in implementing the 12 points to a safer service—developed from the work of the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide—which includes recommendations for patients who self-harm.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has commissioned into *(a)* suicide and *(b)* deliberate self-harm in young people; and if he will make a statement on the findings of the research. [161082]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A national collaborative is being established with Department of Health funding for the monitoring of deliberate self-harm (DSH), including that of young people. Through this monitoring it will be possible to estimate the number of suicides in the year following DSH and thereby inform suicide and deliberate self-harm strategies.

The Department has recently funded a study of coroners' records covering different methods of suicide across the whole age range.

The Department also funds the Oxford Monitoring System for Attempted Suicide. Its aims are to provide comprehensive monitoring of long-term trends in DSH; the identification of information (causes, risk factors and outcome) relevant to service provision for DSH patients; an evaluation of suicide prevention strategies; and specific research projects on DSH.

In addition, mental health promotion pilots targeted at young men are being established in three areas, which, if successfully evaluated, will become part of the National Institute for Mental Health in England's mental health promotion work.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many reported instances of deliberate self-harm there have been in people under 30 years old in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* age and *(b)* sex. [161084]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy in reducing the number of young people who commit suicide. [161085]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England annual report on progress 2003 sets out progress in implementing the strategy, including action taken to reduce suicide in young people. A copy of the report is available in the Library.

Seroxat

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether Seroxat is prescribed to children under 18. [158526]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Paroxetine (Seroxat) is prescribed to patients under the age of 18 although it is not authorised for use in such patients. However, in the United Kingdom a doctor may prescribe outside the terms of a marketing authorisation on his/her own responsibility, if he/she considers that this is in the best interests of the patient and having informed him/herself of the benefits and risks of such an action.

Following advice from the Committee on Safety of Medicines and its expert group on the safety of paroxetine and other Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs), the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency published summaries of clinical trial data relating to all SSRIs on 10 December 2003 in order that prescribes might make informed decisions.

Smoking

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the NHS's progress towards a world-leading smoking cessation service. [160917]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The national health service stop smoking services, set up in 1999, are now well established across England and are a world-leading service. They provide expert advice and support, with nicotine replacement therapy and zyban available on prescription, to smokers wanting to quit. The Department of Health's monitoring results show that in the financial year 2002–03 the services helped around 124,100 people successfully quit (based on self report), at four week follow up.

To evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the national health service stop smoking services, the Department of Health commissioned a team led by Glasgow University to carry out a comprehensive study.

The first results of this evaluation was published in September 2003 as "Bauld L *et al.* Impact of UK national health service smoking cessation services: variations in outcomes in England. Tobacco Control 2003; 12:296–301." The key finding was that

"Well-developed, evidence-based NHS services, reflecting good practice, are yielding positive outcomes".

The final results of the studies are due to be published in autumn 2004.

A copy of this research is available in the Library.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Ambulance Services (Lisburn)

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the Ambulance Services (Lisburn) average journey time is for ambulances stationed at the Lagan Valley Hospital to respond to emergency calls in the Lisburn City area; and what plans he has to provide additional ambulance cover at the Lagan Valley hospital between the hours of 22.00 and 08.00 on Sunday to Thursday each week. [161519]

Angela Smith: The information is not available in the format requested. However, in the period 1 April 2003 to 29 February 2004, 69 per cent. of 999 calls in the Lisburn City area had a response within eight minutes.

Ninety five percent had a response within 18 minutes. There are currently no plans to provide additional ambulance cover at Lisburn ambulance station, which is situated at Lagan Valley Hospital. Nonetheless, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and the Eastern Health and Social Services Board constantly review levels of cover and will redeploy resources as necessary.

Asthma

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of working days lost as a result of asthma in Northern Ireland in the last year for which figures are available. [160612]

Mr. Pearson: Information regarding the cost and number of working days lost as a result of occupational asthma in Northern Ireland is not available. However, it is estimated that the total cost of work-related ill health in Northern Ireland could be as much as £330 million per year and that this accounts for an estimated £365,000 million working days lost each year. It is estimated that over 4,000 people in Northern Ireland are affected by asthma caused or made worse by work and that there are approximately 200 new cases each year.

Birth Statistics

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many births there were in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and how many there were in *(a)* 1994, *(b)* 1989 and *(c)* 1984. [160621]

Mr. Pearson: The following table gives the number of births registered in Northern Ireland in 1984, 1989, 1994 and each year from 1998 to 2002.

Number to registered births in Northern Ireland

	Births Registered
1984	27,693
1989	26,080
1994	24,289
1998	23,861
1999	23,173
2000	21,768
2001	22,251
2002	21,772

Blood Donors

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many registered blood donors there are in Northern Ireland; what the equivalent figures were for each year since 2000; and if he will make a statement on the steps he is taking to increase such figures. [156946]

Angela Smith: In 2003–04 there were 69,837 active donors in Northern Ireland compared with 68,049 active donors in 2002–03.

Due to changes in the interpretation of active donor numbers, comparable data are unavailable for previous years.

The Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service has an ongoing promotional campaign, including advertising in newspapers and on radio and buses, to encourage existing donors and recruit new donors. Currently three mobile units operate each day and blood is also collected at the HQ facility. Opening hours at the HQ facility are to be extended to allow further opportunities to donate.

Civil Service

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of Catholics there were in the senior civil service in the last period for which figures are available. [160332]

Mr. Pearson: At 1 January 2004, the figure was 30 per cent.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Equality Commission on the exclusion of Irish nationals from senior Civil Service posts. [160365]

Mr. Pearson: There have been no formal discussions between Ministers and the Equality Commission on this matter. Officials maintain contact with the Commission on a range of issues and on 27 August 2003, officials from the Department of Finance and Personnel met Commission staff for a general discussion on progress on the Senior Civil Service Review and Associated Action Plan. The discussion covered a range of issues, including the application of nationality rules to reserved posts.

Class Sizes

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average class size in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in Northern Ireland was in each year since 1997. [160475]

Jane Kennedy: The average class size is available only for primary schools. The figures are as follows:

	Average class size
1997–98	23.7
1998–99	24.0
1999–2000	23.8
2000–01	23.7
2001–02	23.4
2002–03	23.3
2003–04	23.1

Compulsory Retirement (NHS)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) which NHS health trusts have a policy of compulsory retirement at 65 years; and if he will make a statement; [157392]

(2) what his policy is on enforced retirement of health service employees on account of age. [160609]

Angela Smith: None of the Health and Social Services Trusts in Northern Ireland operates a policy of compulsory retirement at 65 years. However, most HPSS employment contracts stipulate 65 years as the normal retirement age.

This does not preclude staff from working beyond the normal retirement age in the interests of service provision and at the discretion of the Trust. Individuals wishing to continue to work after age 65 years must be both mentally and physically able to carry out the full duties of the post.

Consultant Obstetricians

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the merits of publishing *(a)* caesarean rates and *(b)* general outcomes for individual consultant obstetricians in Northern Ireland. [160616]

Angela Smith: Information on caesarean section rates in Northern Ireland is maintained on the Child Health Systems of the four Health and Social Services Boards. This information is routinely available on request, but there are no plans at present for wider publication.

There are no plans to make information on caesarean section rates for individual consultant obstetricians in Northern Ireland routinely available. Casemix issues and other factors can render the publication of such information unreliable as an indicator of performance and can invite inappropriate comparisons of individual rates of caesarean section.

Counterfeit Crime

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what quantities of counterfeit goods were seized by the police in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [159548]

Jane Kennedy: The quantities of counterfeit goods which have been seized by the Police in Northern Ireland since April 1998 are contained in the following table. Seizures for 2003–04 are recorded until 29 February 2004. Details are not available for the quantities of counterfeit goods seized in 1997–98 and 2000–01.

	number of items seized				
Description of items	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Music CDs/cassettes/MP3	3,902	11,126	29,564	63,250	80,500
Video tapes/DVDs/VCDs	3,092	4,424	28,795	28,680	40,000
Clothing	5,518	5,116	22,489	27,370	35,000
Electronic Games		51,090	28,000	36,850	15,000
Watches Perfume/Sunglasses	136	280	5,560	1,200	500
Computer and associated equipment Video recorders/copiers	16	50	178	150	350
Computer software	—	—	—	9,380	5,000
Power tools	—	—	—	2,500	1,000
Drink	—	—	—	—	30,000

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what resources are available to *(a)* the police in Northern Ireland and *(b)* other agencies to tackle the problem of counterfeit crime in Northern Ireland. [159551]

Jane Kennedy: It is not possible to distill out the amount of resources specifically expended on tackling Intellectual Property Crime (IPC) throughout Northern Ireland. Confronting IPC is a priority for the Northern Ireland Organised Crime Task Force and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) take lead responsibility. The budget available to PSNI for 2003–04 is £707.7 million.

Drug Addicts

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many drug addicts received drug rehabilitation treatment in Northern Ireland in each year since 2000. [156942]

Angela Smith: The information is not available in the format requested.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding was allocated to drug rehabilitation in Northern Ireland in each year since 2000; and if he will make a statement on the provision of drug rehabilitation in Northern Ireland. [156947]

Angela Smith: The information requested on funding for drug rehabilitation is not available.

While the majority of drug rehabilitation can and does take place in the community as part of an overall community care and rehabilitation programme, there is also the more intensive programme of residential rehabilitation. Provision also exists within each Board area to refer individuals to rehabilitation centres outside Northern Ireland if appropriate. Research to assess the level of need and demand for such a service here remains a priority.

Fire Stations

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the decision by the Chief Fire Officer for Northern Ireland, to issue a directive on *(a)* the flying of the Union flag outside fire stations and *(b)* the removal of portraits of Her Majesty the Queen from inside stations. [160500]

Angela Smith: The information requested is as follows.

(a) The Chief Fire Officer issued a circular on 18 December 2003 which outlined the dates on which the Union Flag would be flown at Fire Brigade Headquarters. The circular indicated that the Union Flag is to be flown on the same dates as at Government buildings, and at Brigade Headquarters only.

(b) The circular also stated that the Authority had revised its arrangements for the display of the portrait of Her Majesty the Queen, and had decided that no portraits should be on display in any Brigade premises other than its Headquarters.

Responsibility for these matters belongs to the Authority and to the Chief Fire Officer. The circular is in line with best practice and guidance for the public sector and with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Infant Deaths

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many suspicious deaths of infants there were in the Newtownabbey police area in each year since 2000, broken down by the stage the investigation has reached. [159568]

Jane Kennedy: The Child Abuse and Rape Enquiry Unit (CARE) in Newtownabbey review all reports of sudden infant deaths. In 2001 one death was referred to the Coroner and in 2002 two deaths were referred; the Coroner directed no further action in all three cases. In 2003 one death was investigated and the matter has been referred to the Department of Public Prosecutions for direction.

Invest Northern Ireland

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how much IDB/InvestNI land has been sold in each of the last 15 years, broken down by *(a)* parliamentary constituency and *(b)* council area; and what amount of this land remains (i) zoned and (ii) used for industrial purposes; [159589]

(2) how many IDB/InvestNI-owned sites have been sold in each of the last 15 years, broken down by *(a)* parliamentary constituency and *(b)* council area; and how many of these sites remain (i) zoned and (ii) used for industrial purposes. [159592]

Mr. Pearson: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Irish Fertilizer Industries

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will urgently raise through the normal channels of North/South contact the situation of the former employees of Irish Fertilizer Industries based in Northern Ireland (Richardson's), in respect of their expectations of receiving pension entitlement; and if he will make a statement. [159051]

Mr. Pearson: I have raised the pension entitlement issue with the Irish Fertilizer Industries shareholders on a number of occasions. The Trustees appointed to manage the fund following closure have now lodged a debt with the liquidator and this is being considered as part of the overall liquidation process. I will write to the shareholders to express my continued concerns.

Irish Republican Army

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland about arresting people for belonging to the IRA; and if he will make a statement. [159642]

Jane Kennedy: The Secretary of State meets the Chief Constable on a regular basis to discuss a range of security matters including those relating to membership of proscribed organisations.

Male Teenage Suicides

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action is being taken to address suicide among male teenagers; and if he will make a statement. [157382]

Angela Smith: The promoting Mental Health Strategy and Action Plan launched last year includes a specific section on preventing suicide. A range of preventive measures are being taken under the strategy including promoting coping skills, suicide awareness and outreach work with young people in areas of need and especially young men. Action is also being taken under the drug and alcohol strategies to offer support and counselling to young men affected by addiction difficulties.

Manufacturing

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many jobs have been *(a)* lost and *(b)* created in the manufacturing sector in Northern Ireland during the last five years. [159744]

Mr. Pearson: Over the last five years, to 5 March 2004, there were 19,058 redundancies in the manufacturing sector in Northern Ireland confirmed to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

Information on the number of jobs created is not available. However, figures from the Northern Ireland Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) can be used to estimate the net change in employee jobs during the last five years. Latest figures from the QES show that in September 2003 there were 91,830 employee jobs in manufacturing. This represents a decrease of 16,010 (−14.8 per cent.) from the September 1998 figure of 107,840. Over the same five year period there has been a net increase of 51,790 (8.4 per cent.) in the total number of employee jobs in Northern Ireland, which at September 2003 was estimated to be 667,050, the highest September employee jobs figure on record.

Medical Negligence

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what costs to public funds resulted from medical negligence in each of the last 10 years. [157394]

Angela Smith: Information in relation to each of the last five years is as follows. The information relating to the previous five years is not readily available in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Amounts paid in settlements for clinical negligence claims from 1998–99 to 2002–03

	£000
1998–99	12,286
1999–2000	4,859
2000–01	9,409
2001–02	7,415
2002–03	13,550

Mental Health

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to improve child and adolescent psychiatry services before the report from the review of mental health. [157389]

Angela Smith: £4 million is being made available for a new purpose built 16–18 bedded unit for child and adolescent inpatient services. An outline business case is at present being considered by the Department. It is proposed that a further 10 child and adolescent beds are provided in the west of the province. Two Trusts have submitted business cases which are currently being considered.

Priorities for Action 2003–04 requires Boards and Trusts to develop child and adolescent community mental health services, especially those services that reduce demand for in-patient services. A Regional Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Development Group has been proposed to oversee the implementation of a regional commissioning statement in respect of all four tiers of services in Northern Ireland.

Midwives

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many midwifery vacancies there are in Northern Ireland. [157386]

Angela Smith: The information requested is as follows in the table.

Number of midwifery vacancies (including long-term vacancies) within all trusts as at 30 September 2003

Trust	Headcount	WTE[1]
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	4	4.00
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	0	0.00
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	0	0.00
Causeway HSS Trust	0	0.00
Craigavon and Banbridge Comm. HSS Trust	0	0.00
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	3	3.00
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	0	0.00
Foyle Community HSS Trust	0	0.00
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust	0	0.00
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	0	0.00
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	0	0.00
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	0	0.00
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	0	0.00
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	1	0.55
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	0	0.00
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	0	0.00
Ulster Comm. and Hosp. Group HSS Trust	0	0.00
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	3	3.00
Total	11	10.55

[1] Whole Time Equivalent

Number of long-term (vacant more than three months) midwifery vacancies within all trusts as at 30 September 2003

Trust	Headcount	WTE[1]
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	2	2.00
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	0	0.00
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	0	0.00
Causeway HSS Trust	0	0.00
Craigavon and Banbridge Comm. HSS Trust	0	0.00
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	2	2.00
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	0	0.00
Foyle Community HSS Trust	0	0.00
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust	0	0.00
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	0	0.00
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	0	0.00
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	0	0.00
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	0	0.00
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	0	0.00
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	0	0.00
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	0	0.00
Ulster Comm. and Hosp. Group HSS Trust	0	0.00
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	0	0.00
Total	4	4.00

[1] Whole Time Equivalent

Newpin

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will allocate the Newpin charitable organisation £30,000 to cover core services for the coming year; and if he will make a statement. [157335]

Angela Smith: Newpin in Northern Ireland is in the process of establishing as a new company. Until the position on the status of the organisation has been resolved, DHSSPS is not in a position to allocate any funding to cover core services for the coming year.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding was provided to the Newpin charitable organisation in each year since 1996. [157379]

Angela Smith: The accounts for the Northern Ireland Newpin office are managed centrally by National Newpin in London and it has, therefore, not been possible to provide a breakdown of the separate sources of funding for the Northern Ireland Newpin office.

Details of the funding provided to Foyle Newpin and Rathcoole Newpin since 1996 are as follows.

Source of funding	*Amount (£)*
Foyle Newpin	
1995–96	
Western Health and Social Services Board	20,000
1996–97	
Western Health and Social Services Board	20,000
1997–98	
Western Health and Social Services Board	44,000
Save the Children Fund	15,000
1998–99	
Western Health and Social Services Board	44,000
Children in Need	16,038
EU Childhood Fund	7,573
Save the Children Fund	18,000
1999–2000	
Western Health and Social Services Board	66,000
2000–01	
Western Health and Social Services Board	68,000
2001–02	
Western Health and Social Services Board	70,000
2002–03	
Western Health and Social Services Board	72,152
Londonderry Regeneration Initiative	14,800
Community Fund NI	22,763
2003–04	
Western Health and Social Services Board	75,000
Rathcoole Newpin	
1995–96	
Northern Health and Social Services Board	20,000
1996–97	
Northern Health and Social Services Board	20,000
International Fund for Ireland	19,200
1997–98	
Northern Health and Social Services Board	51,380
International Fund for Ireland	40,800
1998–99	
Northern Health and Social Services Board	62,332
International Fund for Ireland	40,000
1999–2000	
Northern Health and Social Services Board	70,000
2000–01	
Northern Health and Social Services Board	74,500
2001–02	
Northern Health and Social Services Board	78,798
2002–03	
Northern Health and Social Services Board	83,711
2003–04	
Northern Health and Social Services Board	85,700

Northern Ireland Assembly

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what additional duties will be the responsibility of the Deputy Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly as a result of the recent resignation of the Speaker. [160618]

Mr. Spellar: Section 39(4) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 provides that when the office of Speaker (Presiding Officer) is vacant, his functions may be exercised by a deputy. The functions of the Speaker may therefore be exercised by a Deputy Speaker, following the resignation of Lord Alderdice. During suspension those functions are confined to those arising under the provisions of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and relate principally to the resignation of members of the Assembly, and the notification of vacancies.

Nursing

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many nursing vacancies there are in North and West Belfast Trust. [157384]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 166W.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many nurses from North and West Belfast Health Trust *(a)* were forced to retire on account of age within the last year and *(b)* have been informed that they will have to retire because they are 65-years-old. [157385]

Angela Smith: The information is as follows.

(a) None

(b) Three Bank Nurses in the Trust were advised that they would be required to retire at the age of 65 years in accordance with the express term in their contracts of employment.

However, all three staff have subsequently had their employment contracts extended to enable the Trust to develop a Trust-wide policy to address the issue of staff working beyond 65 years.

Teacher-Pupil Ratios

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* primary school and *(b)* secondary school teachers there were per pupil of the relevant age group in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [160477]

Jane Kennedy: The pupil:teacher ratios since 1997 are as follows:

	Primary schools	*Prep. Departments*	*Post-primary schools*
1997–98	20.4	18.7	14.8
1998–99	20.6	17.3	14.9
1999–2000	20.4	17.5	14.7
2001–01	20.2	16.6	14.5
2001–02	19.9	16.9	14.4
2002–03	19.7	17.2	14.4

Teenage Pregnancies

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the cost resulting from teenage pregnancies in Northern Ireland in the last year for which figures are available. [160627]

Angela Smith: The estimated annual cost of teenage pregnancies is £27 million. This is made up of an estimated £24 million in Social Security Benefits and administration plus tax revenue foregone over 1½ years, together with £2.5 million direct hospital delivery costs, and an estimated £0.5 million on actions aimed at reducing the number of teenage pregnancies.

Voluntary Sector

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the review of funding of the voluntary sector; and when policy emerging from that review is likely to be implemented. [160363]

Mr. Spellar: In acknowledgment of the concerns around the longer term sustainability of the voluntary and community sector the Government established a Task Force on Resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector in Northern Ireland in February 2003. Membership of the Task Force consists of representatives from the statutory sector and a number of independent members.

Under its Terms of Reference, the Task Force has been asked to identify action to be taken to ensure that the voluntary and community sector can continue to make a substantial contribution to the achievement of Government objectives and to the well-being of the Northern Ireland community. It will also seek to identify the impact of impending changes to funding programmes and actions which may be necessary to diversify support for the sector, in the context of an agreed definition of sustainability.

The Task Force established Working Groups comprising key stakeholders to consider themes important to both Government and the voluntary and community sector. It also took account of submissions received and commissioned research to compile their Position Paper, "Pathways for Change", which was published in December 2003. The document has been the subject of widespread public consultation which will conclude on 26 March 2004. Final recommendations from the Task Force will be available in early summer.

Until these recommendations have been received it is not possible to comment on any policy which may emerge or an implementation date.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons the basis for core funding of ethnic minority voluntary groups has been changed to a one year cycle. [160364]

Mr. Spellar: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Hull North (Mr. McNamara) on 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 945W.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether an equality impact assessment has been carried out on funding policy for ethnic minority voluntary groups. [160457]

Mr. Spellar: The funding scheme for minority ethnic voluntary organisations was not the subject of an equality impact assessment when it was established in April 2001.

In the event of any change to the policy of the existing scheme, in light of the new Race Equality Strategy, it will be subject to assessment under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Waiting Times

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the waiting times for appointments were at *(a)* ophthalmology and *(b)* ear, nose and throat clinics in the (i) Down Lisburn Trust, (ii) South and East Belfast Trust, (iii) North and West Belfast Trust and (iv) Ulster Community and Hospital Trust. [161525]

Angela Smith: North and West Belfast Trust and South and East Belfast Trust do not hold out-patient clinics for the Ophthalmology and Ear, Nose and Throat specialties. Patients from these areas in Belfast would routinely attend Ophthalmology or Ear, Nose and Throat outpatient clinics at Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust, Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust, Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust or Ulster Community and Hospitals trust.

The numbers waiting for first out-patient appointment to the Ophthalmology and Ear, Nose and Throat specialties are as follows.

Number waiting for first out-patient appointment in the Ear, Nose and Throat specialty, quarter ending 31 December 2003, by trust

	Months waiting for first out-patient appointment					
Trust	*0–2*	*3–11*	*12–17*	*18–23*	*24+*	*Total waiting*
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS	921	1,589	582	123	65	3,280
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	566	338	60	9	5	978
Ulster Community and Hospitals HSS Trust	981	416	9	1	0	1,407
Down and Lisburn HSS Trust	442	458	78	64	21	1,063
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	348	334	20	2	1	705
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	1,281	2,800	1,180	448	561	6,270
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	719	817	93	53	12	1,694
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	311	518	183	152	62	1,226
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	80	165	22	0	0	267
Altnagelvin Hospitals HSS Trust	663	937	75	7	5	1,687
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	678	531	2	1	0	1,212

Source:
CH3 Part 1&2.

Number waiting for first out-patient appointment in the Ophthalmology specialty, quarter ending 31 December 2003, by trust

	Months waiting for first out-patient appointment					
Trust	*0–2*	*3–5*	*6–8*	*9–11*	*12–14*	*Total waiting*
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS	1,950	2,433	305	64	29	4,781
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	115	78	7	2	0	202
Ulster Community & Hospitals HSS Trust	841	1,006	265	55	90	2,257
Down and Lisburn HSS Trust	244	373	114	6	1	738
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	660	410	2	2	1	1,075
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	463	1,043	227	98	40	1,871
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	251	451	156	97	180	1,135
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	135	210	80	74	33	532
Altnagelvin Hospitals HSS Trust	1,251	2,139	583	254	167	4,394

Source:
CH3 Part 1 & 2.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 17 March 2004

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Combined Heat and Power

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) when combined heat and power was last discussed at the Sustainable Energy Policy Network; and if she will make a statement; [160222]

(2) what studies the Sustainable Energy Policy Network has commissioned on combined heat and power; and if she will make a statement; [160223]

(3) what *(a)* fiscal and *(b)* regulatory measures are being considered by the Sustainable Energy Policy Network to encourage combined heat and power. [160224]

Mr. Morley: Within government Defra takes the lead for policy on combined heat and power (CHP) and CHP is regularly discussed at the monthly meetings of the Sustainable Energy Policy Programme Board.

Since the publication of the Energy White Paper the Government have commissioned the following studies on combined heat and power:

Modelling Good Quality Combined Heat and Power Capacity to 2010: This report was published in October and is available on the DTI website.

National Allocation Plan: Implications and Options for CHP: This report was published in February and is available on the Defra website.

A third study evaluates the UK potential for CHP and will be published shortly.

In developing the final CHP Strategy for publication after the Easter Recess we have been considering the full range of policy options to support achievement of the CHP target of 10,000MWe by 2010.

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans her Department has to use combined heat and power to cut fuel poverty. [160090]

Mr. Morley: The Community Energy programme is a three-year £50 million UK-wide grant programme promoting community heating largely through the use of CHP. One of the aims of the programme is to help 100,000 people to heat their homes affordably. We hope that it will be possible to extend the programme beyond March 2005, but this is subject to resources being available.

In the Energy White Paper we made a commitment to support field trials for micro-CHP. These trials, which are being conducted by the Carbon Trust, will help determine the fuel and carbon saving potential of micro-CHP in a range of applications. The results of the trials will help inform the development of any future support for the technology, including in fuel poor households.

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Government's combined heat and power strategy will be published. [160091]

Mr. Morley: We intend publishing the Government's CHP Strategy to 2010 after the Easter Recess, to coincide with the first year review of the Energy White Paper.

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the Government's progress in meeting its target to achieve 10GW of combined heat and power by 2010. [160092]

Mr. Morley: At the end of 2002, installed CHP capacity stood at 4,742MWe. More up to date data will become available when the annual Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES) is published in the summer by DTI. The measures to support CHP announced in the Energy White Paper, taken together with the measures we have previously introduced and detailed in the draft CHP Strategy, will significantly help CHP. We will set out the full range of support measures in the Government's Strategy for CHP to 2010, which we intend to publish after the Easter Recess.

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what policies her Department has introduced since the publication of the Energy White Paper to encourage investor confidence in the combined heat and power sector; and if she will make a statement. [160093]

Mr. Morley: Since last year's Energy White Paper we have been progressing delivery of the support measures for CHP set out therein. Before Christmas I set an ambitious target to source at least 15 per cent. of electricity for government use from Good Quality CHP by 2010. These Energy White Paper support measures, taken together with the measures we have previously introduced and detailed in the draft CHP Strategy, will significantly help CHP. We will set out the full range of support measures in the Government's Strategy for CHP to 2010, which we intend to publish after the Easter Recess.

Environmental Sustainability

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the change in costs to local authorities of the Household Waste Recycling Act 2003. [159012]

Mr. Morley: Local authorities are making significant changes in their waste management practices to meet their current Statutory Performance Standards for recycling and composting and in anticipation of legally binding requirements under the Landfill Directive to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste landfilled. It is too early to tell whether the requirements of the Household Waste Recycling Act will impose costs in excess of those being incurred to meet the aforementioned targets.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with local government on local authority performance on waste recycling. [159006]

Mr. Morley: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State has not held any specific discussions with local government on local authority waste recycling performance recently.

I will follow up my predecessor's correspondence with local authorities whose progress towards meeting their recycling and composting targets was judged to be of most concern, once data on local authority recycling performance for 2003–04 are available, in summer 2004, and those failing to meet those targets have been identified.

There is regular discussion on local authority waste management issues, including performance, between Defra and the Local Government Association (LGA) officials.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of local authority performance on *(a)* waste recycling and *(b)* waste disposal. [159010]

Mr. Morley: In December 2003 the Audit Commission published information on local authorities waste and recycling performance as part of its Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) data for 2002–03. These data supplement local authorities own projections of their 2003–04 performance and provide an indication of local authorities movement towards their statutory performance standards. It suggests that England is within reach of its 2003–04 national target of 17 per cent.

Local authorities actual performance for 2003–04 will be known when the BVPI figures are published in December 2004.

The Waste Implementation Programme, as part of its approach to targeted support, is identifying those authorities facing barriers to improved performance and how these might be overcome.

Euratom Treaty (Inspection Visits)

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the Euratom Treaty Article 35 verification visits to *(a)* Sellafield and *(b)* Dounreay to take place; and if she will make a statement on the arrangements for these inspection visits. [161161]

Mr. Morley: The European Commission undertook an Article 35 verification visit to Sellafield from 8–12 March. We understand the Commission is contemplating a visit to Dounreay within the next year or so, but no date has been fixed.

The arrangements for the Sellafield visit were made by the Department in co-operation with BNFL, the Environment Agency and the Food Standards Agency. The Scottish Executive would be responsible for the arrangements for a visit to Dounreay in co-operation with UKAEA, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and FSA.

Agricultural Support (Severely Disadvantaged Areas)

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the change in support which will result from the introduction of single farm payment to farmers in severely disadvantaged areas. [160491]

Alun Michael: Defra will publish shortly an analysis of the economic impact on the English farming industry of the decoupling of CAP direct payment and the decision to allocate entitlement on the basis set out in the Secretary of State's Statement to the House on 12 February.

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the *(a)* severely disadvantaged areas and *(b)* number of farmers in each. [160492]

Alun Michael: The severely disadvantaged areas are those areas of land within less favourable areas of the UK, which are handicapped, principally by reason of high altitude, harsh climate, short growing season, low fertility, difficult topography or remoteness. The Severely Disadvantaged Areas are defined on an England basis and are as such treated as one entity. There are approximately 7,400 agricultural holdings wholly within the SDA and another 7,300 that straddle the boundary. The SDA are defined in statutory maps and in England lie within the following constituencies:

Barnsley West and Penistone County Constituency
Barrow and Furness County Constituency
Berwick-Upon-Tweed County Constituency
Bishop Auckland County Constituency
Blackburn Borough Constituency
Bolton North East Borough Constituency
Bolton West County Constituency
Bradford South Borough Constituency
Bradford West Borough Constituency
Bridgwater County Constituency
Burnley Borough Constituency
Burton County Constituency
Bury North Borough Constituency
Calder Valley County Constituency
Chorley County Constituency
City of Durham County Constituency
Colne Valley County Constituency
Copeland County Constituency
Halifax Borough Constituency
Hazel Grove County Constituency
Hereford County Constituency
Hexham County Constituency
Heywood and Middleton County Constituency
High Peak County Constituency
Huddersfield Borough Constituency
Hyndburn Borough Constituency
Keighley County Constituency
Lancaster and Wyre County Constituency
Leominster County Constituency
Ludlow County Constituency
Macclesfield County Constituency
Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland County Constituency
Morecambe and Lunesdale County Constituency
North Cornwall County Constituency
North Devon County Constituency

North East Derbyshire County Constituency
North Shropshire County Constituency
North West Durham County Constituency
Oldham East and Saddleworth County Constituency
Pendle Borough Constituency
Penrith and The Border County Constituency
Pudsey Borough Constituency
Ribble Valley County Constituency
Richmond (Yorks) County Constituency
Rochdale County Constituency
Rossendale and Darwen Borough Constituency
Ryedale County Constituency
Scarborough and Whitby County Constituency
Sheffield, Hallam County Constituency
Sheffield, Hillsborough County Constituency
Shipley County Constituency
Shrewsbury and Atcham County Constituency
Skipton and Ripon County Constituency
South East Cornwall County Constituency
South West Devon County Constituency
St. Ives County Constituency
Staffordshire Moorlands County Constituency
Stalybridge and Hyde County Constituency
Stone County Constituency
Taunton County Constituency
Teignbridge County Constituency
Tiverton and Honiton County Constituency
Torridge and West Devon County Constituency
Totnes County Constituency
Truro and St. Austell County Constituency
Vale of York County Constituency
Wakefield County Constituency
West Derbyshire County Constituency
Westmorland and Lonsdale County Constituency
Workington County Constituency

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is towards providing assistance to farmers in severely disadvantaged areas following the introduction of the single farm payment. [160493]

Alun Michael: Eligible farmers in severely disadvantaged areas will receive the single farm payment, and will continue to be eligible for other schemes such as the Hill Farm Allowance and the agri-environment schemes (which are currently being reviewed). The need for assistance to these or other areas will need to be re-examined in the context of the new EU Rural Development Regulation which will come into effect in 2007, and the changing needs of sustainable development in the uplands.

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the financial cost would be of restricting single farm payment at the lower rate to farmers in the hill farm allowance area rather than to all farmers in the severely disadvantaged areas. [160494]

Alun Michael: The aggregate subsidy available for the single farm payment in England is not affected by the definition of the English regions for allocating entitlement.

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will rescind her decision to pay single farm payment at a lower rate to all farmers in severely disadvantaged areas; and if she will make a statement. [160495]

Alun Michael: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, made her decision in the best interests of the industry as a whole while recognising that there will be individual winners and losers.

Animal Welfare

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has made *(a)* in the Council of Ministers and *(b)* to the European Commission to include the minimum values legislation in the proposed EU regulation on the protection of animals during transport; and if she will make a statement. [159500]

Alun Michael: Minimum values rules apply to certain types of working horses if they are exported for work and to ponies, but not to the majority of horses. It has been confirmed by the Commission in response to an Opposition MEP that such a restriction on the free movement of horses is unacceptable and this is consistent with our own legal advice and the understanding of horse welfare organisations in the UK. That is why we have instead developed an equivalent, welfare based alternative in collaboration with equine organisations. Our wishes have been included in the draft welfare in transport regulation, now before the Council of Agriculture Ministers. We have no intention of relaxing the application of the minimum values rules until the new arrangements are in place. It should be noted that they will have wider application to the welfare of horses within the United Kingdom and across Europe including the accession states.

Badgers/Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* biosecurity and *(b)* other mechanisms are available to farmers to prevent badger damage to forage crops. [157856]

Mr. Bradshaw: Electric fences provide the best defence against short-term seasonal damage to crops.

Advice on using electric fences to protect crops is given in the Defra leaflet 'Badger problems: use of electric fencing to prevent agricultural damage' (TAN 15). This can be obtained from the Defra website (at: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/leaflets.htm) or by contacting the National Wildlife Management Team (Tel: 0845 6014523, local rate).

Additional detailed, technical information is available in the 'Electric Fence Reference Manual' (Research and Development Surveillance Report 607), which is also available to download from the Defra website.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated cash value of damage done to growing maize by badgers was in the last year for which figures are available. [157927]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no national estimate of the financial value of damage done to growing maize by badgers.

A survey of badger damage to agricultural properties in England and Wales was conducted in 1997 based on 1,982 farmer questionnaire returns (out of a sample of 3,600 farmers).

Crop damage was reported by 21 per cent. of respondents with wheat, forage maize and vines being damaged most frequently. 69 respondents reported badger damage to maize. The mean percentage of maize crops damaged, based on estimates provided by the respondents, was 5 per cent., with a maximum of 20 per cent. Reports of damage to maize were concentrated in August and September.

Damage assessments of eight maize fields known to be used by badgers recorded an average of 114 unharvestable maize cobs per hectare. Forage maize crops protected by electric fencing sustained 96 per cent. less damage than unprotected crops (advice on electric fencing is given in the Defra leaflet TAN 15 'Badger problems: use of electric fencing to prevent agricultural damage', which is available from the Defra website at: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/leaflets.htm

Moore N.P., Whiterow, A., Langton, S.D., Kelly, P.P., Garthwaite, D., Bishop, J.D. and Cheeseman, C.L. (1998) 'The Assessment of Badger Damage to Agriculture and Forestry'. Report to MAFF, Project VC 0318 .

Moore N.P., Whiterow, A., Kelly, P.F., Garthwaite, D., Bishop, J.D., Langton, S.D. and Cheeseman, C.L. (1999) Survey of badger Meles meles damage to agriculture in England and Wales. Journal of Applied Ecology 36:974–988

Poole, D., McKillop, G.I., Western, G., Hancocks, P., Packer, J. and Coombs, C. (1999) 'Effectiveness of an electric fence to reduce badger damage to field crops'. Report to MAFF.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what reports her Department has received of predation by badgers on newly born lambs. [157928]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department does not keep a record of such reports. The only records kept relate to applications for licences under Section 10(2)(b) of the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992.

Since April 2001, when computerised records were introduced, there have been four applications alleging lamb predation by badgers.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost is of undertaking the National Badger Survey; and from which departmental budget it is financed. [157940]

Mr. Bradshaw: The most recent national badger survey, which was carried out in the mid-1990s[1] by scientists from the University of Bristol, was funded by The People's Trust for Endangered Species. The Trust is a Registered Charity (No. 274206).

[1] Details of the survey are published in "Changes in the British badger population", 1988 to 1997' by G. Wilson, S. Harris and G. McLaren (1997), published by the People's Trust for Endangered Species, London (ISBN 1 85580 018 7)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what evidence has been collated on localised effects on ground nesting bird populations of badger predation; and which localities have been affected. [157944]

Mr. Bradshaw: Evidence has been gathered on the effect of badgers on ground nesting birds as part of a Defra funded project investigating the ecological consequences of badger removal. Some of this work has been conducted in treatment areas of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT). Evidence collated so far includes an exhaustive review of the published literature, and experimental field research using artificial bird nests. The results of these studies will be presented to Defra in March 2005.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether increased farm biosecurity in areas of high badger population *(a)* deprives badgers of a high value food source and *(b)* increases predation on other wildlife. [157952]

Mr. Bradshaw: Cereal grains and many plant fibres pass through the badger's digestive system relatively unchanged, and may, therefore, often represent low-value food sources. Work by the Central Science Laboratory at Woodchester Park showed that badgers were significantly more likely to visit farm buildings, to exploit such foods, during periods of low rainfall when alternative natural food items such as earthworms were less available. Other mammals and birds form a relatively small part of the diet of badgers in the UK, and there is no evidence to suggest that increased farm biosecurity would result in increased badger predation on such wildlife.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to what extent badger groups are distinct entities; whether mixing occurs between social groups; and under what circumstances. [157988]

Mr. Bradshaw: In much of Great Britain, badgers live in social groups within defined territories which the groups defend. However, mixing between groups is common. Individuals make foraging and breeding forays into neighbouring territories. Temporary and permanent dispersal from one group to another also occurs regularly. Details of movement rates at the Central Science Laboratory's Woodchester Park study area can be found in Rogers, L. M., Delahay, R. J., Cheeseman, C. L., Langton, S., Smith, G. C. and Clifton-Hadley, R. (1998) Movement of badgers ("Meles males") in a high density population: Individual, population and disease effects. "Proceedings of the Royal Society (Series B)", 265, 1269–1276.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to what extent and under what circumstances non-resident badgers will visit setts inhabited by social groups to which they do not belong; and whether this represents a significant opportunity for the spread of TB between badger social groups. [157989]

Mr. Bradshaw: The most common reason for visits by badgers to setts within other social groups is likely to be breeding forays by males. This close contact between individuals from different groups is likely to represent an opportunity for the inter-group spread of TB.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received from the *(a)* Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and *(b)* Royal Society for the Protection of Birds on the welfare of badgers. [157993]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information requested is as follows.

(a) The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals contributed to the recent public consultation exercise on licensing under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 by my Department. The welfare of badgers was a central issue of this review.

We are not aware of any other representations specifically concerned with badger welfare in recent years.

(b) We have received no representations on badger welfare from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in recent years.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 523W, on badgers, what the scientific basis is of her view of the national impact of badgers on bird populations. [158212]

Mr. Bradshaw: As I responded in my previous answer, badgers are known to predate on ground nesting birds. The impact of such predation at a national level is not quantified but is not thought to significantly affect populations nationally. As I have previously replied, Defra is currently funding research aimed at providing a scientifically vigorous assessment of the importance of badger predation on ground nesting birds. The Central Science Laboratory is due to report its findings in March 2005. Until that time I cannot give a definitive answer of the effect of badgers on ground nesting birds.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures can be taken to disinfect badger setts after the clearance of TB-infected inhabitants. [157929]

Mr. Bradshaw: Although several methods have been discussed in the past, including bactericidal fumigants and napalm, there are no feasible measures to disinfect badger setts currently available. The size and complexity of sett structure, and the propensity of badgers to re-excavate setts soon after destruction, precludes the efficacy of any of these methods.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether specific TB spoligotypes are more prevalent in badgers than they are in *(a)* bovines and *(b)* other reservoirs. [157931]

Mr. Bradshaw: As, in GB, only a very small proportion of the national badger population and an even smaller proportion of other wildlife species susceptible to bovine TB have been assessed by the spoligotyping technique, it is not possible to provide a meaningful comparison of specific TB spoligotyping prevalences for these three defined populations.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether instances of the detection of multiple TB spoligotypes in single herds have been reported to her Department. [157932]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are many instances where more than one spoligotype has been isolated from a single herd during the same incident. A project (an integrated approach to the application of "Mycobacterium bovis genotyping" for the control of bovine tuberculosis in GB), funded by thee Department, is investigating such data sets; the project is due to end next September and the final report should be available shortly afterwards.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the reliability of the badger TB ELISA test in determining infection in individual badgers. [157941]

Mr. Bradshaw: The indirect ELISA for badgers was evaluated using blood samples collected from 1982 badgers killed during statutory badger removal operations in 1991 to 1993. The sensitivity of the test was 40.7 per cent. and the specificity 94.3 per cent.. The positive predictive value (the percentage of positive test results where the animal was confirmed as infected) of the test was 67.5 per cent., the negative predictive value (the percentage of negative test results where the animal was confirmed as uninfected) 84.6 per cent.. A project (development of immunological assays for the detection of Mycobacterium bovis .nfection in badgers), funded by the Department, is investigating this area. The project is due to end in March 2005 and the final report should be available shortly afterwards.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of *(a)* existing treatments for TB in (i) cattle and (ii) badgers and *(b)* the potential for developing new treatments. [157959]

Mr. Bradshaw: Cattle which are suspected of being affected with tuberculosis must be slaughtered in accordance with the requirements of The Tuberculosis England and Wales Order 1984. Treatment of cattle affected with tuberculosis in cattle is prohibited by the same Order.

If badgers are found in a debilitated condition, which may have been caused by tuberculosis, they may be humanely destroyed to prevent further suffering. There are no circumstances under which antibiotic treatment of badgers with clinical signs would be advisable.

The possibility of vaccinating cattle or badgers to prevent the spread of bovine tuberculosis, is part of the wide ranging TB research programme being carried out by Defra.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to what extent the requirements for the development of BCG vaccination regimes for badgers have been satisifed. [157990]

Mr. Bradshaw: Collaborative research with the Republic of Ireland has shown that parenteral BCG vaccination provides a degree of protection against experimental challenge with "Mycobacterium bovis" in badgers. Progress has also been made in developing immunological tests to detect tuberculosis infection in badgers. Work is under way to identify a feasible and appropriate strategy for delivery of BCG, probably in an oral formulation, to wildlife populations.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her best estimate is of how long it will take to develop a suitable badger vaccine to the point where field trials may be undertaken. [157991]

Mr. Bradshaw: Over the next three-year period, it is proposed to carry out a field experiment to determine the impact of BCG on natural transmission of tuberculosis in badgers, and to optimise vaccine delivery strategies for wildlife. We will then be in a position to carry out a field trial of the impact of badger vaccination on herd breakdown. The size and duration of such a trial could be on a scale similar to that of the randomised badger culling trial.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether an application has been made for European Union funding to assist in the development of badger TB vaccines. [157992]

Mr. Bradshaw: An application was submitted to the EU to support badger vaccination in 1995. The referees comments indicated that they considered this to be a problem restricted to UK and the Republic of Ireland and not of general benefit across member states.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the infective dose range for badgers in respect of M. bovis is in terms of the different portals of entry. [158003]

Mr. Bradshaw: Post mortem examination of naturally infected wild badgers suggests the aerogenic route is the primary route of infection. Currently, experimental infection studies in the Republic of Ireland are underway which may provide information about infective dose via the endobronchial route.

The other significant route of infection for wild badgers is via direct inoculation with infected saliva through bite wounding. The number of organisms required to establish tuberculosis via this route is unknown although previous experimental work showed that intradermal inoculation with approximately 1,000 organisms could result in generalised tuberculosis.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether bovine TB is a natural feature of the ecosystem inhabited by badgers. [158004]

Mr. Bradshaw: Diseases are often natural components of ecosystems and, as such, may play an important role in ecological processes. Badgers, however, inhabit a largely artificial habitat consisting mainly of managed landscapes, particularly for pastoral agriculture. It is this close association with grazing cattle that may have first brought badgers into contact with bovine TB.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for how many years a breeding badger sow can excrete *M. bovis* bacilli; how many progeny a sow on average produces each year; and how many infected progeny a single female can produce in its lifetime. [158017]

Mr. Bradshaw: Typically, an infected badger may excrete *M. bovis* bacilli for 12–15 months before death, although there are recorded cases of animals with TB living up to nine years. Litter size per sow varies from one to five with an average of three but, generally, only one or two sows per social group will breed each year. It cannot be assumed that an infected sow will infect all its progeny. Assuming, however, that a breeding sow gives birth each year, an animal excreting *M. bovis* for 12–15 months could, theoretically, produce between one and ten infected cubs. It should also be noted that 50 to 70 per cent. of cubs die within their first year.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 219W, on bovine TB, whether provision has been made for the changing values of individual cattle according to *(a)* market circumstances and *(b)* the status of animals; and whether farmers will be allowed constantly to update the values registered with her Department. [158258]

Mr. Bradshaw: In a consultation document on the Rationalisation of Compensation for Notifiable Animal Diseases, issued on 24 October 2003, it was proposed that compensation would be payable according to table valuations based on market prices to be published monthly, although provision would be made for individual valuations by an approved valuer to be registered at any time before the issue of a notice of intention to slaughter.

The responses to the consultation document are still being considered and no decisions have yet been taken.

Birds

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she has collated on the effect of predator control on the sustainability of ground nesting bird populations. [158023]

Mr. Bradshaw: Ground nesting birds can be predated on by a variety of other species. There have been relatively few studies of the effectiveness of removing predators to protect bird populations. A recent review of studies (Cote, I. M. and Sutherland, W.J. 1997, The effectiveness of removing predators to protect bird populations Conservation Biology 11: 395–405) concluded that the studies indicated that the removal of predators had a large, positive effect on the hatching success and post-breeding population sizes of target bird species but not on breeding population size, the effects on which varied considerably between studies. Whilst predator control may thus be a useful tool for game managers, it may not meet the requirements of those seeking to increase the size of bird breeding populations.

Birds

All wild birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and under Section 16 of the Act licences can be issued to allow certain birds to be controlled for the purposes of conserving wild birds or for the purposes of conserving flora and fauna. Defra currently issues a general licence to allow the control of certain species, such as those of the corvid family for this purpose.

Mammals

Mink may also predate certain ground nesting birds. Mink are not protected by domestic legislation and can thus be controlled on a year round basis.

With regard to badgers I have already informed my hon. Friend that Defra is currently funding research aimed at providing a scientifically vigorous assessment of the importance of badger predation on ground nesting birds. The Central Science Laboratory is due to report its findings in March 2005. Until that time I cannot give a definitive answer of the effect of badgers on ground nesting birds.

Export Subsidies

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is the Government's policy to eliminate all agricultural export subsidies under the Common Agricultural Policy; and if she will make a statement. [160561]

Alun Michael: The World Trade Organisation Doha Declaration commits all member countries to negotiations aimed at reductions, with a view to phasing out, all forms of agricultural export subsidies. The Government fully supports this commitment.

Farm Subsidies

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 5 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1149–51W, on single farm payments, what *(a)* assessment and *(b)* economic analyses were (i) conducted and (ii) completed (A) before and (B) after her statement to the House on 12 February 2004. [160915]

Alun Michael: Numerous economic analyses of the single farm payment have been undertaken over recent months and work is still on-going. These are being drawn together into a single comprehensive document which will be made available shortly.

GM Crops

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it her policy to refuse permission for the planting of GM crops in the UK until after *(a)* a co-existence regime to prevent contamination of non-GM crops and *(b)* a liability regime to determine who must pay damages for harm caused by GM crops has been approved by both Houses of Parliament. [158275]

Mr. Morley: The Government have been considering the report on these issues by the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission and we will set out our thinking shortly.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will ensure that new scientific evidence from Norway on the Cauliflower Mosaic Virus promoter is taken into account before a decision is taken on the seed listing of Chardon LL fodder maize. [160572]

Mr. Morley: The reported new scientific evidence from Norway on the cauliflower mosaic virus promoter has yet to be published. When the details of this research do become available, the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE), which advises the Government on the risks posed by the intentional release of GMOs, will be asked to evaluate these data and advise on their implications for existing consents and future applications.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she was informed that *(a)* the transgenic insert used in Chardon LL is unstable and *(b)* the variety would be incapable of passing the distinctiveness, uniformity and stability test under Directive 2001/18/EC. [160573]

Mr. Morley: Chardon LL is a variety of the genetically modified maize known as T25. I understand that the Belgian Competent Authority under Directive 2001/18/EC has published an analysis of the structure of the transgenic insert in GM maize T25 and that this was considered by the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE) at their meeting on 22 January 2004. ACRE advised that they needed to see the full detail of the Belgian reassessment before coming to a final view and this has been requested from the Belgian Competent Authority. However, their preliminary analysis was that the work did not necessarily indicate instability of the insert, but consisted of additional information available now due to recent improvements in methods for the analysis of transformation events.

The requirement for distinctness, uniformity and stability testing falls under Directive 2002/53/EC and not 2001/18/EC. Chardon LL underwent such testing in France, according to internationally recognised methods and the protocol adopted by the Community Plant Variety Office, as required by the EU legislation. Chardon LL was found to be distinct, uniform and stable by the French testing authorities.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the implications of the Chardon LL feeding trial involving broiler chickens in relation to the health and safety of GMHT fodder maize. [160578]

Mr. Morley: The Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE) and the Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs (ACAF) carried out a comprehensive review of the risks posed by the marketing and use of Bayer GM maize T25 (Chardon LL) in response to concerns raised in the Chardon LL public hearing on seed listing. Their advice was published in December 2002. The Committees concluded that there is no evidence from the broiler chicken feeding study that suggests that T25 maize grain fed to animals would pose an increased risk compared with conventional maize grain. However, ACRE advised that the raw data from the chicken feeding study should be re-analysed to maximise its value/power in

comparing the nutritional value of T25 maize grain with that of a non-GM counterpart. The results of this further analysis did not alter the conclusion about the risk posed by this GM maize but slightly increased the power of the study in the extent to which it can resolve any differences between chickens fed GM maize grain and those fed non-GM maize grain. For more detailed comments please refer to ACRE'S advice on Chardon LL maize at http://defra.gov.uk/environment/acre/advice/advice20d.htm, this is also available in the parliamentary Library.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she has communicated the shortcomings of the farm-scale evaluation maize trials to the lead competent authority in France, as required by Directive 2001/18/EC; and whether she has requested a variation in the conditions attached to the Part C consent for Chardon LL fodder maize. [160579]

Mr. Morley: I am not aware of any shortcomings of the farm-scale evaluation (FSE) maize trials, the results have been endorsed by both the Scientific Steering Committee overseeing the evaluations and the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE). Officials sent the results of the Farm Scale Evaluations, together with the non-specialist and scientific summaries, to the European Commission and the Competent Authorities of the member states for their information on 20 and 21 October 2003. ACRE published its advice on the FSE results on 13 January 2004, and this advice was also sent to the Commission and the Competent Authorities on that date. On 9 March 2004 officials wrote to the French Competent Authority, which issued the relevant consent on behalf of all EU member states, seeking amendments to the consent for Bayer T25 GM maize (Chardon LL) to limit herbicide use with the crop in line with ACRE'S advice.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she was informed that the dry matter content for Chardon LL averages 27.3 per cent. [160619]

Mr. Morley: The Secretary of State was made aware in March 2003 of a range of issues raised in the public hearing on Chardon, including its dry matter content. The lower than average dry matter content in the performance trials was taken into account, but the conclusion on overall value for cultivation and use rightly took the other important characteristics into consideration. These included better than average dry matter yield, early vigour and resistance to lodging.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her oral statement to the House of 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1381–96, on GM policy, what discussions she has had with biotechnology companies; and what timetable she has set for the establishment of a compensation scheme for farmers and growers adversely affected by the growing of GM crops. [161662]

Mr. Morley: *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* We have said that we will consult stakeholders on options for providing compensation to non-GM farmers who suffer financially through no fault of their own. Until that consultation exercise has been completed it is too soon to say what the outcome might be. We will consult on this and the co-existence issue as soon as possible. Clearly, discussions with the biotechnology companies will be a necessary part of the consultation process.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her oral statement to the House of 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1381–96, on GM policy, what support she will give to *(a)* areas, *(b)* zones, *(c)* local authorities, *(d)* regions and *(e)* nations which are seeking to achieve GM free status; and what discussions she plans to have with her counterparts in EU member states to assist in clarifying the (i) powers and (ii) responsibilities of places which seek to declare such status. [161663]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* This issue has already been discussed within the EU. It is clear that under EU law it is not possible to impose blanket GM-free status on a compulsory or statutory basis at any geographic level. The Government is not seeking to promote GM-free status, but we have said that we will provide guidance to farmers who may want to establish voluntary zones in which GM crops are not cultivated.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her oral statement to the House of 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1381–96, on GM policy, what rules she plans to put in place in the coming months. [161664]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* As the statement confirmed, we envisage that measures to facilitate the co-existence of GM and non-GM crops will be in place before any commercial GM cultivation. Our intention is that GM producers should observe a code of practice on co-existence which has statutory backing, based on the 0.9 per cent. EU labelling threshold for adventitious GM presence. We will consult in due course on the details of this, on whether a lower GM threshold might apply for organic production, and on options for compensating non-GM farmers who suffer financially because a GM presence exceeds statutory thresholds.

Nappies

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how her Department is working to make new parents aware of the environmental implications of using disposable nappies. [159094]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* The Waste and Resources Action Programme has a waste minimisation programme which includes work to ensure parents are given sufficient information to make an informed choice on whether to use re-usable or disposable nappies. This involves, among other things, the employment of a health professional to undertake work in maternity units.

The Environment Agency is undertaking a Life Cycle Analysis to assess the environmental impacts of both re-usable and disposable nappies. The aim is to publish this in the spring.

Radioactive Waste

Dr. Jack Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what discussions she has had with *(a)* the Scottish Executive, *(b)* the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and *(c)* the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority about proposals by the latter to transfer low level radioactive waste from Dounreay to Drigg; why the application for a licence was not advertised in England; and if she will make a statement; [160504]

(2) whether she has agreed to proposals by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority to transfer radioactive waste from Dounreay to Drigg in Cumbria. [160505]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* The Secretary of State has not had discussions with the Scottish Executive, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) or the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) about these proposals.

The low-level radioactive waste (LLW) disposal site at Drigg in Cumbria is owned by BNFL and is operated by the company on a commercial basis as a United Kingdom facility. BNFL hold an authorisation from the Environment Agency to dispose of LLW at Drigg. I understand that the proposed transfer of waste from Dounreay to Drigg could be accommodated within BNFL's existing authorisation for the site. I also understand that the consultation arrangements adopted in this case were consistent with those for other such transfers to Drigg from sites throughout the United Kingdom. It was not, therefore, considered necessary by the regulators to advertise this application in England.

I understand from the Environment Agency that they intend to carry out a comprehensive review of BNFL's authorisation for Drigg later this year. As part of this review, full public consultations will be undertaken.

The application by UKAEA to transfer LLW to Drigg has been made to SEPA, whose responsibility it is to determine the application under the provisions of the Radioactive Substances Act 1993, subject to the powers of Scottish Ministers. Given that Drigg is operated as a United Kingdom facility and that its existing authorisation is sufficient to cover the proposed transfer, it is not necessary for the Secretary of State to be involved in determining UKAEA's current application.

Slaughtered Stock (Compensation)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will estimate the cumulative savings that her Department will achieve over financial years 2003–04 to 2012–13 by changing the basis on which compensation is paid to farmers for animals slaughtered. [157951]

Mr. Bradshaw: The responses to the consultation document on the Rationalisation of Compensation for Notifiable Animal Diseases are still being considered and no decisions have yet been taken. It is therefore too early to determine whether any savings will be made.

Radon Gas

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what proportion of UK housing stock has been tested for radon gas; [159891]

(2) how many houses have been tested for radon gas in each of the last seven years; [159892]

(3) what plans she has to encourage the testing of the remainder of UK housing stock for radon gas. [159893]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* Since 1987 successive Governments have run a radon measurement programme to identify the extent of the radon problem in the UK. During that time 450 thousand of the 25 million UK homes have been tested. Over the last eight years Government-funded measurement programmes have mainly focused on homes likely to be at most risk. In England and Northern Ireland, for example, that has meant every home with a greater than 5 per cent. probability of radon levels being at or above the National Radiological Protection Board's (NRPB) recommended radon "Action Level" (200 becquerels per cubic metre of air) has been offered a free radon test. In accordance with NRPB's recommendation, we advise that remedial action is taken to reduce radon levels in any home at or above the Action Level. It is estimated that over 100,000 homes in the UK are likely to be at or above the Action Level and, of those, around 43,000 have been found. Approximately 90 per cent. of the homes above the Action Level are likely to be in England.

The following table sets out the number of homes tested by NRPB for radon gas in the UK since 1996 up to the present date. The figures from 1998 onwards include radon tests that have been offered to householders as part of pilot studies and a wider on-going programme where the Government are working in partnership with nearly 30 local authorities in England to help householders in radon-affected areas to take action to cut levels of radon in their homes. This supports the Government's policy of encouraging more radon remediation amongst householders in order to reduce the risk that high radon levels pose to their health. The pilot studies run between 1998 and 2000 showed that working at a local level worked well and could double the amount of radon remediation. This success led to the rolling out of the current programme based on the experiences and lessons learned from the pilot studies. We shall be reviewing the initiative before it ends in March 2005 to allow us to determine how successful it has been. We will then make a judgment on the future direction of the Government's radon programme.

In Northern Ireland, the Department of the Environment is continuing to make free radon tests available to householders in areas where radon concentrations in homes have a 1 per cent. or greater probability of being at or above the Action Level. In addition, radon awareness campaigns will be conducted in selected areas of Northern Ireland in partnership with local authorities. These will target areas where there is a greater than 10 per cent. probability of radon levels in a home exceeding the Action Level.

Plans to encourage the testing of dwellings for radon in Scotland and Wales rest with the Scottish Executive and National Assembly for Wales respectively.

	Number of Tests
1996	70,500
1997	54,000
1998	25,800
1999	9,600
2000	6,800
2001	8,000
2002	10,000
2003[1]	11,100
2004[1]	14,100

[1] All the Government-funded tests have used detectors that need to be in place for 3 months. Some tests in 2003 and all those so far commenced in the first two months of 2004 are therefore still to be completed.

Note:

Totals rounded to three significant figures.

Sakhalin Oil and Gas Project

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what consultation has been undertaken by her Department and the Export Credits Guarantee Department on the Sakhalin II phase 2 oil and gas project in relation to its potential impacts upon the Western Gray Whale. [158234]

Mr. Morley: I have discussed the Sakhalin II project, particularly in relation to its potential impacts upon the Western Gray Whale population, with the Minister for Trade and Investment, Mike O'Brien.

The Export Credit Guarantee Department has consulted with the Sakhalin Energy Group at all stages of the project application. In addition, ECGD officials have met and corresponded with a range of stakeholders and NGO's from both Sakhalin and the UK. Defra has been kept informed of these consultations.

Voles/Hedgehogs

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated population was of *(a)* voles and *(b)* hedgehogs in Great Britain in 1990; and what the current estimate of the population is. [158010]

Mr. Bradshaw: Very few data are available on national populations of many mammal species, including voles and hedgehogs. Perhaps the best recent estimates are those made in a publication by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in 1995[1]. At that time they made the following estimates:

Species	*GB population estimate*	*Reliability of estimate*	*Changing status*
Field vole	75,000,000	Low	Possible decline
Bank vole	23,000,000	Within 50 per cent.	Probably stable
Hedgehog	1,555,000	Low	Possible decline

Since that time, no further national population estimates have been published for these species.

The Tracking Mammals Partnership has now been set up to instigate long-term monitoring of all mammal species, but this will focus on detecting trends rather than estimating absolute abundance (www.jncc.gov.uk/species/mammals/trackingmammals).

[1] A review of British mammals: Population estimates and conservation status of British mammals other than cetaceans by Stephen Harris, Pat Morris, Stephanie Wray and Derek Yalden (1995) JNCC, Peterborough (ISBN 1573701683).

TRANSPORT

Channel Tunnel

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with the operators of the Channel Tunnel rail services; and if he will make a statement. [161697]

Mr. McNulty: Officials hold regular meetings with parties involved in the Channel Tunnel industry to discuss a range of issues.

Disciplinary/Grievance Procedures

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether each agency in the Department for Transport has disciplinary procedures which comply with *(a)* the ACAS handbook on discipline and grievances at work and *(b)* the ACAS Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures. [161048]

Mr. McNulty: The disciplinary procedures used in the Department for Transport and its Agencies are considered to be compliant with both the ACAS Handbook and Code of Practice. However it is planned to review the procedures to ensure compliance with the revised ACAS Code of Practice that takes effect from 1 October 2004.

Employment Tribunals

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money has been spent *(a)* settling and *(b)* contesting claims registered at employment tribunals since the beginning of 2003 in the Department for Transport for (i) race discrimination, (ii) sex discrimination, (iii) disability discrimination, (iv) unfair dismissal and (v) equal pay. [161046]

Mr. McNulty: In 2003 the Department for Transport (excluding Executive Agencies) was the Respondent in the following Employment Tribunal cases:

Equal Pay—10 cases—the total cost of these cases was £44,244.78 made up of Treasury Solicitors and Counsels costs;

Disability Discrimination—1 case—total costs £3,350 made up of Treasury Solicitors costs only;

Race Discrimination—3 cases (with 2 originating from the same applicant)—total costs £16,220.73 made up of Treasury Solicitors and Counsels fees.

In addition to legal fees and disbursements the Central Department paid out a total of £16,727 in settlement costs.

There were no claims for unfair dismissal.

Infrastructure Improvement

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the transport infrastructure improvement schemes for which he is responsible in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough; and what their projected cost is. [158407]

Mr. McNulty: Most transport infrastructure improvement schemes in London are now the responsibility of the Mayor and Transport for London (TfL). Those for which the Secretary of State retains some responsibility are:

Crossrail:

The Government received Cross London Rail Link Limited's (CLRL) Crossrail Business Case in July 2003. We are supportive of the principle of a Crossrail scheme to increase transport capacity across London. But we need to be sure that the current proposals are deliverable, affordable and value for money.

This is why the Secretary of State announced a review of CLRL's proposals, by an expert team under the chairmanship of Adrian Montague. He has now received advice from Adrian Montague which he is studying closely.

Channel Tunnel Rail Link Section 2:

Running from Ebbsfleet in Kent to St. Pancras station, construction of Section 2 began in July 2001. It is broadly on budget and is expected to have cost £3.3 billion when it opens in 2007. Section 2 is currently over 60 per cent. complete.

Additionally Network Rail and the Strategic Rail Authority are progressing the West Coast Route Modernisation, part of which is within Greater London, at a cost of some £7.5 billion. Other schemes in the wider South-east which impact on parts of London are the replacement of Mark I rolling stock (£1 billion), and the power supply upgrade in the Southern region (£2 billion).

Within London planned schemes include Thameslink 2000 with a projected cost of some £3 billion and the East London Line Extensions scheme, with an estimated cost of about £1 billion, together with the freight gauge enhancement on the North London line (£40 million). The Strategic Rail Authority have also been a partner in the launch of the "Overground Network" with Transport for London, involving branding and customer information enhancements at 40 south London stations at a total cost of £1.5 million. There are also a number of smaller scale improvements being taken forward via the Rail Passenger Partnerships (RPP) fund.

With the exception of one RPP scheme (Brentford station improvement), none of the schemes mentioned falls within a single London borough.

Motorised Scooters

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce requirements for *(a)* eyesight tests, *(b)* a road test and road awareness programme, *(c)* a requirement to have insurance, *(d)* a set maintenance standard and *(e)* training and testing, for people wishing to drive motorised scooters and if he will make a statement. [161966]

Mr. Jamieson: Motorised scooters are motor vehicles within the meaning of Section 185 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, and are therefore already subject to road traffic law. To be used on the road they must comply with construction regulations and meet registration, road tax, insurance and MOT testing requirements. The rider is required to hold an appropriate driver licence and wear a suitable motorcycle helmet.

This does not apply to Class 2 and 3 Invalid Carriages which are defined as "not being a motor vehicle" for certain parts of Road Traffic Law. We believe that most users of these vehicles operate them safely but a review of the law is needed. The review is due to be completed during the summer. Decisions will then be taken about whether any changes are required to the law.

Steer Davies Gleave

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many contracts, and of what value, the Strategic Rail Authority has placed with Steer Davies Gleave in each of the last five years. [161794]

Mr. McNulty: The information is provided in the following table.

£ thousand

	Number of contracts[1]	*Total value*[2]
1999	[3]1	48
2000	—	—
2001	—	—
2002	3	214
2003	12	1,184

[1] With a value of over £25,000

[2] Rounded

[3] Contract let by Office of Passenger Rail Franchising

Stress

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many days have been lost owing to stress in *(a)* the Department for Transport and *(b)* Transec Division. [161047]

Mr. McNulty: In 2003 for the centre of the Department for Transport (excluding the Executive Agencies) 2,206 days were recorded with 'stress/anxiety/depression' given as the reason for absence. For Transport Security Directorate, 349 days were recorded under this heading during 2003.

Travel Costs

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the change in costs of travelling by *(a)* car, *(b)* train and *(c)* bus in each year since 1974, taking 1974 as a base figure of 100, and discounting inflation. [160584]

Mr. McNulty: The following table shows the information requested on real changes in the cost of transport as indices based on 1974 = 100. The information is available in Transport Statistics Great Britain, although the current edition does not include 2003 data and is based to 1992 = 100.

	All motoring[1]	Rail	Bus
1974	100.0	100.0	100.0
1975	104.4	109.2	104.9
1976	101.2	124.3	114.9
1977	99.9	125.0	114.1
1978	99.7	132.0	119.4
1979	104.0	128.8	118.4
1980	103.8	135.6	127.0
1981	103.9	138.6	125.6
1982	101.0	146.5	133.3
1983	103.2	148.5	134.7
1984	100.7	142.0	131.1
1985	99.4	142.4	128.9
1986	94.7	147.0	135.2
1987	96.3	148.4	137.4
1988	95.9	151.3	140.1
1989	93.9	153.2	140.2
1990	91.0	152.2	135.1
1991	92.3	158.8	145.5
1992	95.0	164.2	150.2
1993	97.6	173.0	154.3
1994	98.5	176.3	154.6
1995	97.0	178.1	155.0
1996	97.5	180.3	156.9
1997	99.6	178.9	157.6
1998	99.3	180.1	157.3
1999	100.2	183.8	160.6
2000	101.0	181.6	162.3
2001	98.7	185.3	166.1
2002	96.3	186.5	168.5
2003	94.8	184.3	170.6

[1] "All motoring" includes the cost of purchase, maintenance, fuel, tax and insurance

Source:

Retail Price Index, Office for National Statistics

Way to Go Campaign

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress with the Way to Go campaign. [161193]

Mr. McNulty: The Government are committed to developing a modern, efficient and sustainable transport system fit for the 21st century. The Way to Go campaign raises a number of important issues about how our transport system can better serve people's needs. Many of the transport schemes being implemented across the country are those advocated by the Way to Go campaign. Our plans will deliver over £180 billion of public and private money across all forms of transport over the 10 years to 2010, a 45 per cent. real terms increase over the previous decade.

PRIME MINISTER

Parliamentary Questions

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister what his policy is in respect of providing substantive answers to written parliamentary questions where he concludes that to provide such answers would be detrimental to the work of Government. [162307]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to the answer I gave him on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 849W.

United Nations Charter

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister what proposals he has for reform of the United Nations Charter to allow the United Nations greater rights *(a)* to intervene within the territory of member states and *(b)* otherwise to override their sovereignty. [162309]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Llew Smith) on 15 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 38W.

SCOTLAND

Climate Change

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what conclusions he has drawn for Scotland from the writings of the Government Chief Scientist on climate change. [160371]

Mrs. McGuire: The Government Chief Scientist's article in the journal Science in January 2004 concluded that the evidence for man-made climate change was convincing and could not be ignored. The Government shares that view, as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said in reply to my hon. Friend on 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1655W.

The Government are committed to making significant reductions in emissions of the greenhouse gases which cause man-made climate change. The UK Climate Change Programme sets out a number of measures to reduce such emissions; the UK programme includes the Scottish Executive's Climate Change Programme.

Departmental Communications

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many staff are employed in the Department to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158167]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office employs three press officers, one of whom is part time, who are current members of the Government Information and Communications Service. The office also has one special adviser. The Special Adviser's Code of Conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister. This includes communications activity. No other staff are employed in the communications field.

Departmental Officials

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which former officials of the Department have asked for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG. [156888]

Mrs. McGuire: No former officials of the Scotland Office have asked for permission to join these organisations.

Secondments

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG have made to his Department since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from his Department have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [156913]

Mrs. McGuire: No secondments have been made between the Scotland Office and these organisations.

Temporary Staff

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many staff the Department employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Department paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158245]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office currently employs two temporary staff. This comprises 2.3 per cent. of total staff employed.

Details of payments to employment agencies for temporary staff are as follows:

	£
2001–02	75,392
2002–03	78,539
2003–04	[1]59,991

[1] To end February 2004.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast Agreement

8. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the progress of the current talks about the future of the Belfast agreement. [160824]

Mr. Spellar: As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said last week, after the St. Patrick's Day break the two Governments will be seeking to inject fresh momentum into the dialogue between the political parties, with a view to securing early movement on an end to paramilitarism and the return of devolved government. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach will visit Northern Ireland next Tuesday for discussions with the parties.

Devolution

9. **Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent discussions he has had on the restoration of devolution in the Province. [160825]

Mr. Spellar: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave previously to the hon. Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter).

Decommissioning

10. **Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made on arms decommissioning. [160826]

Jane Kennedy: Four acts of decommissioning have taken place to date—one carried out by the LVF and three by PIRA. The latest decommission act occurred on 21 October 2003 in which the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning confirmed they witnessed a third event in which IRA weapons were put beyond use. The quantity of arms involved was larger than the quantity put beyond use in the previous event.

Employment (Strangford)

11. **Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on job prospects in Strangford. [160827]

Mr. Pearson: Residents based claimant rates indicate that in January 2004 unemployment in the Strangford constituency stood at 3.6 per cent. However, the hon. Lady will be aware of the recent announcement locally that TKECC is to close with the loss of 550 jobs. Invest NIs Local Office team is working with other Government Departments to facilitate retraining and other employment-related options for the work force. Since April 2002 Invest NI has offered client companies in the constituency over £3 million assistance towards investment of over £12 million. In addition it has supported 270 business start-ups and continues to work in close partnership with the local councils in support of their economic development activities.

Higher Education

12. **Mr. Luke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the expansion of higher education in Northern Ireland. [160828]

Jane Kennedy: Since 1999 there has been an increase of over 4,000 in the number of full time equivalent student places in Northern Ireland. This year we will be increasing provision by an additional 330 places and are also considering a substantial increase in places on specialist medical and social working training courses.

Economy

13. **Mr. Lyons:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the development of the Northern Ireland economy since the Good Friday agreement. [160829]

Mr. Pearson: Since the Good Friday agreement was signed, the number of employee jobs has reached record levels, increasing by 61,550 from March 1998 to December 2003. Claimant count unemployment at 4.1 per cent. of the work force is at its lowest rate since the mid 1970s and growth in Gross Value Added of 13 per cent. between 1998 and 2001 makes Northern Ireland one of the fastest growing UK regions.

Burns Report

14. **Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress he has made in

implementing the recommendations of the Burns report on post-primary education; and if he will make a statement. [160830]

Jane Kennedy: Following extensive consultation on the Burns report, I established the Post-Primary Review Working Group to consider the responses to the consultation and provide advice about future post-primary arrangements. On 26 January 2004, I announced that I had accepted the Working Group's recommendations, and work has started on implementing these recommendations.

Ambulance Drivers

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what legislation or regulations prevent diabetes sufferers from serving as ambulance drivers in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [161349]

Angela Smith: The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 (as amended) prescribes insulin-dependent diabetes as a relevant disability in respect of the issue of Group 2 licences (i.e. those that authorise the driving of passenger carrying vehicles and large goods vehicles).

In light of this, and in accordance with Article 9(3) of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 (as amended) the Department of the Environment must not grant such a licence to a person who suffers from such a disability.

In addition, it is the opinion of The Secretary of State for Transport's Medical Advisory Panel on Driving and Diabetes that drivers with insulin-treated diabetes should not drive emergency vehicles

A person whose diabetes is treated by diet alone or by diet and tablets are allowed to hold such a licence provided they are otherwise in good health.

In order to be employed as an Ambulance person within Northern Ireland Ambulance Service there is an essential requirement to hold a full and clean driving licence, which includes Categories C1 (to drive minibuses) and D1 (to drive vehicles over 3½ tonnes).

In the past where it has come to the attention of the NI Ambulance Service that an employee has developed diabetes, it has redeployed the employee from driving duties.

Avian Influenza

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what precautions have been taken to counter an outbreak of avian influenza in Northern Ireland. [160617]

Mr. Pearson: Following the introduction of EU restrictions on imports of poultry meat and poultry products from Thailand on 23 January, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), as a precautionary measure, suspended all imports of live poultry, poultry meat products, captive birds, pet birds and eggs for human consumption from Asian countries most affected by avian influenza. Equivalent action was also taken following a further outbreak of avian influenza in the USA in February and the same action is currently under way for the outbreak in Canada.

As regards the animal health aspects, DARD has a contingency plan for dealing with an outbreak of avian influenza, which has been approved by the EU. This plan is currently being reviewed and updated to ensure that any outbreak could be dealt with quickly and effectively. Advice regarding biosecurity has been re-issued to the poultry industry and is available on the DARD website.

As regards the human health aspects, the Department of Health and Public Safety (DHSSPS) in conjunction with DARD and other UK Health Departments, is continuing to monitor international developments in relation to the transmission of avian influenza to humans. DHSSPS has placed information for travellers on their website and has been working with DARD and the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland to ensure protection of poultry workers.

Belfast City Airport

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the outcome of his Department's meeting with representatives of Belfast City Airport on 10 March. [161347]

Angela Smith: The purpose of the meeting was to clarify the City Airport's request for a review of the existing Planning Agreement, to determine the issues involved in such a review and to discuss a possible way forward.

The City Airport representatives have agreed to submit details of their proposals and their possible implications for the current Planning Agreement to the Planning Service, probably within two months. A further meeting will then be arranged.

Birth Statistics

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many birth defects there were in Northern Ireland in each year since 1999. [160622]

Angela Smith: Information on all birth defects is not available. However, information is collected by the Chief Medical Officer on the number of children born each year suffering from a number of selected congenital malformations in Northern Ireland. This information for the years 1999 to 2003 is as follows.

Number of Selected Congenital Malformations, 1999 to 2003

	Anencephalus	*Hydrocephalus*	*Spina Bifida*	*Downs Syndrome*
1999	5	13	8	27
2000	0	13	9	32
2001	5	11	13	36
2002[1]	6	9	9	34
2003[1]	3	6	12	32

[1] Figures not yet published by CMO.
Source:
Northern Ireland Child Health System

Ceasefire Breaches

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to his answer of 2 March

2004, *Official Report*, column 836W, on ceasefire breaches, what criteria he uses to assess whether there has been a breach of a ceasefire by a paramilitary group; and how many times since January these criteria have been met by the actions of the *(a)* Provisional IRA, *(b)* UDA and *(c)* UVF. [161469]

Jane Kennedy: Section 3(9) of the Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998 sets out the criteria which the Secretary of State takes account of in making a judgement on the status of a ceasefire. The Secretary of State makes a judgement in the round. The ceasefires of the Provisional IRA and the UVF are recognised, the ceasefire of the UDA is not.

Citizenship Ceremonies

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether citizenship ceremonies taking place in Northern Ireland will follow exactly the same format as in the rest of the United Kingdom. [161397]

Jane Kennedy: The Home Office has set out a basic format for a citizenship ceremony but they will vary from place to place throughout the United Kingdom, both to account for numbers of applicants and the incorporation of local features.

In Northern Ireland, the ceremonies will be held in Hillsborough Castle and will be conducted by a Lord Lieutenant. The format of the ceremonies in Northern Ireland will be an introduction and welcome speech by the Lord Lieutenant. The new citizens will then take an oath and pledge—the only parts of the ceremony which are mandatory throughout the UK. Following this, the Lord Lieutenant will present each of the applicants with their certificate of citizenship. There will then be a short congratulatory speech and the ceremony will end with the playing of the national anthem.

Civil Contingencies Bill

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with his colleagues in the Cabinet Office in relation to the Civil Contingencies Bill; and if he will make a statement. [161292]

Jane Kennedy: There has been regular contact, both at Ministerial and official level, with Cabinet Office and other colleagues in relation to the Civil Contingencies Bill. The Bill will place civil protection on a modern, statutory footing and, together with associated administrative arrangements, will provide a uniform level of protection throughout the United Kingdom.

Civil Service

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many posts in the Northern Ireland Civil Service of the grade equivalent to that of the post of audit manager for the Northern Ireland Court Service as advertised in competition PB/1/04 advertised in each of the last five years *(a)* have and *(b)* have not been reserved. [160338]

Mr. Pearson: Nine competitions to fill posts at this level were advertised as follows.

	Competitions
1999–2000	1
2000–01	1
2001–02	4
2002–03	2
2003–04	1

The competitions were advertised on the basis that none of the posts were reserved for UK nationals.

Costello Report

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the *(a)* meetings and *(b)* discussions he has with (i) school principals and (ii) other interested parties since the publication of the Costello Report. [161286]

Jane Kennedy: Since the publication of the Costello Report, I have met with representatives of the UUP, DUP, SDLP, Sinn Fein, the Alliance Party and the Governing Bodies Association. I have received a request for a meeting with representatives of the Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland and I hope to meet with them in the very near future. Officials have been involved in discussions with members of the Association of Head Teachers in Secondary Schools and with post-primary school principals in the Belfast and Southern Education and Library Boards and shortly with those in the South Eastern Education and Library Board.

Dental Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to facilitate urgent dental procedures in children with special needs. [161686]

Angela Smith: The Department has been in discussion with the Belfast Dental Hospital (Royal Group of Hospitals Trust) and the Community Dental Service to urge identification of spare theatre capacity outside of the Royal site to facilitate treatment for children with special needs.

A working group has also been set up to look at the development and long-term planning for the delivery of dental treatment to children with special needs, and the issues of dental treatment for children and adults with special needs will be addressed within the new Oral Health Strategy which is currently under consideration.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to ensure that young adults with complex medical needs have equality of access to dental care. [161688]

Angela Smith: The Chief Dental Officer has set up a working group to look at future development of dental services for young adults with complex medical needs. The group is chaired by the Dental Director of the Eastern Health and Social Services Board and draws together both medical and dental staff involved in the care of these people.

In addition the Chief Dental Officer is undertaking a new Oral Health Strategy (OHS) for Northern Ireland which will address the needs of the learning disabled and medically compromised children and adults.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on availability of dental services for young people aged 14 years and above with complex medical needs. [161689]

Angela Smith: Dental services for young people over the age of 14 years who have complex medical needs are under considerable pressure at the moment. Currently there is only one consultant and one associate specialist in special needs at the Belfast Dental Hospital. They also provide services at outreach clinics throughout Northern Ireland. Most of these patients require their dental treatment carried out under general anaesthesia on an acute hospital site. A shortage of medical consultant anaesthetists and appropriate facilities have also increased the pressure on services over the past couple of years. Efforts are being made at present to address these difficulties.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the withdrawal of dental services for young people at Muckamore Abbey Hospital. [161690]

Angela Smith: There was a reduction of dental services for young people at Muckamore Abbey Hospital following a review of the use of general anaesthesia and conscious sedation in primary dental care by the Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Dental Officer of the NHS in England.

The report and subsequent guidelines issued in July 2000 effectively limited the use of general anaesthesia to acute hospitals in the interests of patient safety. General anaesthetic sessions at Muckamore Abbey Hospital ceased in December 2000, although routine dental treatment continues to be provided there.

Disability Discrimination

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures he plans to tackle discrimination against people with disabilities in the areas of *(a)* transport and *(b)* access to public buildings. [159557]

Mr. Spellar: The information is as follows:

(a) A number of measures in relation to transport will extend protection for people with disabilities. The Department of the Environment intends to begin consultation in May 2004 on proposals to implement the UK Government's commitment on making (public hire) taxis accessible to people with disabilities. The Department also intends to extend provisions relating to the carrying of guide dogs, hearing dogs and other prescribed categories of dogs to licensed drivers of private hire vehicles in mid 2004.

The Northern Ireland Executive agreed in principle to proceed to the removal of the transport exemption from Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) in Northern Ireland. It is proposed to issue a Northern Ireland consultation document by May 2004 on the removal of the exemption based on the consultation by the Department for Transport in Great Britain. It is also planned to amend Part V of the DDA in respect of Northern Ireland by taking powers to amend the rail Vehicle Accessibility (NI) Regulations 2001.

(b) Additional duties on service providers will come into effect on 1 October 2004. This is the last of three stages placing duties on service providers to help eliminate discrimination in the area of access to services for disabled people and means that service providers may have to make other "reasonable adjustments" in relation to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access.

Drug Seizures

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what quantities of hard drugs were seized by *(a)* the police, *(b)* Customs and Excise and *(c)* other agencies in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [159553]

Jane Kennedy: The amounts of cocaine, heroin and ecstasy seized by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Her Majesty's Customs and Excise, and the Northern Ireland Prison Service are detailed in the following tables.

Customs efforts to protect Northern Ireland from drugs cannot be measured solely on results in Northern Ireland itself. In 2002–03, Customs took out 11,549 kilos of Class A drugs, targeted on the UK, some of which would have been destined for Northern Ireland. We are unable to supply data on drug seizures by Customs, prior to 1999 as to do so would require a substantial manual exercise and would incur disproportionate cost.

Data for drug finds in prison establishments prior to March 2001 was not collated centrally and is not available.

(a) Seizures by Police Service of Northern Ireland

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*April–December 2003*
Cocaine							
Powder (gms)	470.05	4,923.27	340.28	1,701.36	3,399.88	3,023.87	11,740.31
Wraps	4	0	0	0	4	12	5
Crack cocaine							
(gms)	62.5	31.51	10.5	43.13	66.5	50	9.2
Heroin							
Powder (gms)	143.29	227.54	464.82	3114.05	92.11	316.01	169.87
Ampoules	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Mls	0	125.96	2.72	121.01	366	84.26	63.10
Wraps	0	6	11	16	69	1	1

(a) Seizures by Police Service of Northern Ireland

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*April–December 2003*
Ecstasy							
Tablets	85,600	163,023	448,015	410,671	127,368	605,188	207,404
Powder (gms)	26.25	112.0	514.1	498	232.81	1	0
Capsules	169	122	0	11	2	25	0

(b) Seizures by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise

	Cocaine (grams)	*Heroin (grams)*	*Ecstasy (tablets)*
1999–2000	0	0	12,000
2000–01	0	0	118,000
2001–02	0	0	0
2002–03	1,690	0	6

(c) Seizures by Northern Ireland Prison Service.

	Cocaine		*Heroin*		*Ecstasy*
	Grams	*Tablets*	*Grams*	*Wraps*	*Tablets*
2001–02	7.2	7	0	8	38.5
2002–03	0.5	0	0.3	0	11
2003–04[1]	1	0	2.8	0	105

[1] Figures stated for 2003–04 are up to end of November 2003.

Equality Commission

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what reports he has received from *(a)* consultants and *(b)* the Northern Ireland Audit Office on the outcome performance of the Equality Commission; and if he will place the reports in the Library. [160011]

Mr. Spellar: I have not received any reports from consultants relating to the overall outcome performance of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Audit Office carries out an annual audit of the Commission's Accounts. Its opinion is included within the Financial Statement section of the Commission's Annual Report which is laid in Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly. A copy of the Audit Office Management Letter relating to the Annual Accounts is also provided to Office of the First and the deputy First Minister. The Commission's Corporate Plan has been approved by Ministers and its performance against this Plan and its annual Business Plan is subject to on-going monitoring.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the Equality Commission's outcome performance in relation to equality of opportunity. [160012]

Mr. Spellar: The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has a number of statutory duties. Among these are the duties to promote equality of opportunity and affirmative and positive action. It has a Corporate Plan and Annual Business Plan and its performance against these is monitored. The Commission reports on its performance against these within its Annual Report which is laid in both Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Fruit and Vegetable Subsidy

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce a fruit and vegetable subsidy scheme for low income families in Northern Ireland. [161288]

Angela Smith: The Food Benefit Schemes (Northern Ireland) Order provides for the establishment of a new Welfare Food Scheme or Schemes in Northern Ireland. It is anticipated that the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety will be consulting on the detail of a new Scheme in Spring 2004. It is intended that the new Scheme will add fresh fruit and vegetables to the liquid milk and infant formula already available through the current scheme to low income families.

General de Chastelain

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many full days General John de Chastelain has spent in Northern Ireland during 2004. [160591]

Jane Kennedy: During 2004 General de Chastelain has been engaged in decommissioning work in Northern Ireland for approximately one week per month.

Health Professionals

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what precautionary steps are to be taken to ensure that health professionals from other EU member states are fit to practice on arrival in Northern Ireland, with particular reference to the imminent expansion of the European Union. [160629]

Angela Smith: All acceding States are committed to ensuring that the qualifications they award to doctors, nurses responsible for general care, midwives, dentists and pharmacists who begin their training on or after the date of accession meet specified minimum requirements. It is for the European Commission, who are closely monitoring their progress, to see that these obligations are met. They intend to update member states shortly.

Other migrant workers will be entitled to a comparative scrutiny of their qualifications and experience against any national requirements, and, in the event of a substantial difference, may be required to undertake additional training or experience.

Health Promotion

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to enhance *(a)* co-operation and *(b)* communication between local agencies involved in health promotion. [161684]

Angela Smith: Each Health and Social Services Board has established a multi-sectoral Investing for Health Partnership to enhance co-operation between agencies to promote the health and well-being of the people in their areas.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has also set up a Regional Health Promotion Planning Group, chaired by the Chief Executive of the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland, to advise on the development of health promotion policies generally and improve communication in health promotion across Northern Ireland. Investing for Health Partnerships are represented on the Group.

Health Service Employees

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the contribution made by health service employees aged 65 or over to the NHS in Northern Ireland. [160464]

Angela Smith: HPSS employees do a difficult and demanding job which serves the sick and vulnerable in our society. Age is not a factor in determining the value of the contribution of HPSS employees.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many health service employees were aged 65 years and above in Northern Ireland on the latest date for which figures are available. [160585]

Angela Smith: The number of employees aged 65 years and above working in HPSS organisations in Northern Ireland as at 31 December 2003 was 99 (or 65.4 whole time equivalent).

Human Rights Commission

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will extend the term of one or more of the Commissioners due to leave the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission on 29 February; and if he will make a statement. [159855]

Mr. Spellar: Under guidance from the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, there is an expectation that appointments to upper tier bodies such as the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission should be for no more than two terms.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons his Department has decided to continue to pay those members of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission who withdrew from the business of the Commission in September 2003; and if he will make a statement. [159856]

Mr. Spellar: Both Commissioners who withdrew from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in September 2003, while not actively engaged in Commission business, have continued to receive papers. It is on this basis and in the hope that the two Commissioners would re-engage with their fellow Commissioners that the Northern Ireland Office has continued to pay them.

The term of appointment of one of the two Commissioners who withdrew from the Commission's activities expired on 29 February.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects to make a definitive response to the Review of Powers which was submitted to him by the Northern Ireland Rights Commission on 28 February 2001; for what reasons he has not yet made such a response; and if he will make a statement. [159857]

Mr. Spellar: The deadline for responses to the Government's consultation document on the Commission's Review of Powers submission was 16 August 2002, but suspension of the Assembly then intervened.

The Joint Declaration committed the Government to bring the consultation on our draft response to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's Review of Powers to an end following restoration of devolution. This was subsequently brought forward to October 2003. However the election in November and an outstanding response from a key consultee made this impossible.

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission is a key institution of the Belfast Agreement. The Government want it to succeed and are committed to helping it to do so. We are considering our response to the Review of Powers as part of a package of measures to ensure that we have a strong, independent and self-confident Commission, which draws support from all parts of the community. I intend to make an announcement in the near future.

In-patient Beds

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many staffed inpatient beds there were in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [160496]

Angela Smith: Information on the average number of available inpatient beds is shown in the following table. Average available beds are defined as the average number of beds available during the year in wards that are open overnight, measured at midnight. Hospitals may also have a number of beds in wards, which are open only during the day. Beds reserved for day case admission or regular day admission are not included.

Average available beds in Northern Ireland 1997–2003

	Northern Ireland Average
1997–98	9,005.8
1998–99	8,817.8
1999–2000	8,638.8
2000–01	8,571.0
2001–02	8,419.1
2002–03	8,301.3

Source:
Aggregate Hospital Return KH03a.

Insurance Companies

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what powers are available to him to ensure that those insurance companies operating within Northern Ireland who are not members of the Association of British Insurers are able to discharge their present and future obligations to those who have placed business with them; and if he will make a statement. [161676]

Mr. Pearson: The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has no powers in this regard. Insurance is a reserved matter, and the regulation of the insurance industry in the UK is a matter for the Financial Services Authority, within the framework of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and associated secondary legislation.

Police Training College

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what funding has been allocated to the construction of the new Police Service of Northern Ireland training college; and if he will make a statement; [161381]

(2) what he expects the annual budget of the new police training college to be. [161289]

Jane Kennedy: The provision of the new Police College is a Public Private Partnership Project. The detailed specification is currently being developed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The annual cost of operating this college will not be known until the tendering process, which commences later this year, has been completed.

Medical Staff

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses there were per head of population in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [160472]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses were practising in Northern Ireland per 1,000 population in each year since 1997. [160481]

Angela Smith: The information requested is as follows.

Number of doctors, qualified nurses and unqualified nurses working in HPSS organisations per 1,000 population in each year since 1997.

As at	*Doctors*[1]		*Qualified Nurses*[2]		*Unqualified Nurses*	
September	*Headcount*	*[3]WTE*	*Headcount*	*[3]WTE*	*Headcount*	*[3]WTE*
1997	2.1	1.9	7.8	6.7	2.3	2.0
1998	2.2	2.0	7.8	6.7	2.3	2.0
1999	2.1	2.0	7.9	6.7	2.4	2.1
2000	2.2	2.0	8.0	6.8	2.4	2.1
2001	2.2	2.1	8.0	6.8	2.5	2.2
2002	2.4	2.2	8.4	7.1	2.7	2.3
2003	2.4	2.3	8.8	7.5	2.7	2.3

[1] Doctors include medical doctors and general practitioners but exclude those doctors practising exclusively in the private sector
[2] Figures for qualified nurses include health visitors, district nurses, midwives, school nurses, community psychiatric nurses, student health visitors, student midwives and other qualified nurses
[3] Whole Time Equivalent

MRSA

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many deaths were attributable to MRSA in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [160615]

Mr. Pearson: There is no specific code to identify Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in the International Classification of Diseases, and it is thus not possible to provide the exact information requested. Information has been provided in the table based on the number of occasions on which MRSA or *Staphylococcus aureus* are mentioned on the death certificate.

Table: Number of registered deaths where the death certificate mentioned Staphylococcus aureus or MRSA, 1998–2002

	1998	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
All *Staphylococcus aureus*	14	20	17	32	36
MRSA	11	13	14	16	25
Percentage of mentions of *S. aureus* that were MRSA	79	65	82	50	69

Musgrave Park Hospital (Brain Injury Unit)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the funding of the new Acquired Brain Injury Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital. [160586]

Angela Smith: The cost of the project is estimated at £8.4 million. The capital is being provided from Executive Programme Funds, established in the former Northern Ireland Executive's 2000 Budget. The resources are being allocated to Green Park Trust, in line with the financing requirement for the construction programme.

Olympic Bid 2012

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* meetings and *(b)* communications he has had with the organisers of the 2012 London Olympic bid in relation to promoting Northern Ireland as a venue for games events. [161889]

Angela Smith: The Chair of London 2012, Barbara Cassani, is undertaking a series of visits across the UK to promote and secure support for the bid. A visit to Northern Ireland is expected to take place in May or June. The Olympic Bid has also become a standing item on the agenda for the Sports Cabinet, which is attended by UK Sports Ministers, including the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Regular contact takes place with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport through an inter-departmental group on the Olympic bid. One of the issues discussed by this group is how the regions, including Northern Ireland, can benefit from the games. Northern Ireland has been suggested as a venue for some of the matches in the early rounds of the

football tournament and there is also the further possibility, prior to the Games, of hosting training and acclimatisation camps for competing countries.

Paramilitary Offences

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many paramilitary offences have been committed by *(a)* Republican and *(b)* Loyalist groups in Northern Ireland since the signing of the Belfast Agreement, broken down by category of offence. [159643]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is as follows.

Security situation statistics 11 April 1998 to 29 February 2004

	Perceived attribution[1]			
	Loyalist	*Republican*	*Other/not known*	*Total*
Number of deaths as a result of the security situation[2]	55	49	2	106
Number of shooting incidents[3]	942	442	160	1,544
Number of bombing incidents[4]	718	157	47	922
Number of casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults	538	298	0	836
Number of casualties as a result of paramilitary style shootings	521	283	0	804

[1] Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available.
[2] Includes all deaths due to the security situation.
[3] The following types of incidents are included: shots fired by terrorists; shots fired by the security forces; paramilitary-style attacks involving shootings; shots heard (and later confirmed); other violent incidents where shots are fired (e.g. armed robbery).
[4] An individual bombing incident may involve one or more explosive devices. Incidents recorded include explosions and defusings. Incidents involving hoax devices, petrol bombings or incendiaries are excluded.
Note:
Statistics are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment.

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much the Police Service of Northern Ireland has paid to recruitment agencies since its formation; and how much was paid to recruitment agencies in each of the last three years of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. [160611]

Jane Kennedy: As at 1 March 2004 a total of £19,509,108 has been paid to recruitment agencies. This includes spending on the recruitment of police trainees, police reserve trainees and permanent support staff. This total also includes salary costs for temporary agency workers.

Prior to the formation of the Police Service of Northern Ireland in November 2001, the organisation did not utilise recruitment agency personnel.

Punishment Beatings

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to eliminate punishment beatings. [120819]

Jane Kennedy: The Government condemn the practice of so called punishment beatings which are quite simply barbaric and brutalising paramilitary assaults. The Government are engaged in dialogue with political and community leaders and opinion formers to use their influence to bring the practice to an end.

Radiographers

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the most recent figures are for the numbers of *(a)* employed radiographers and *(b)* vacancies for radiographers in Northern Ireland. [160628]

Angela Smith: The information requested is as follows.

Number of radiographers working in HPSS organisations as at 31 December 2003

HPSS organisation	*Headcount*	*WTE*[1]
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	54	48.3
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	0	0.0
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	139	122.6
Causeway HSS Trust	23	19.3
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	0	0.0
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	51	46.2
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	27	19.8
Foyle Community HSS Trust	0	0.0
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust	27	24.9
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	0	0.0
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	19	17.9
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	21	17.0
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	0	0.0
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	87	77.0
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	0	0.0
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	23	21.5
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	56	46.2
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	68	56.2
Total	595	516.9

[1] Whole time equivalent

Number of radiography vacancies (including long-term vacancies) within all HPSS trusts as at 30 September 2003

HPSS organisation	*Headcount*	*WTE*[1]
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	3	2.5
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	0	0.0
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	5	4.5
Causeway HSS Trust	0	0.0
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	0	0.0
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	9	9.0
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	0	0.0
Foyle Community HSS Trust	0	0.0
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust	0	0.0
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	0	0.0
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	0	0.0
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	0	0.0
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	0	0.0
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	2	2.0
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	0	0.0
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	4	4.0
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	2	2.0
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	3	2.0
Total	28	26.0

[1] Whole time equivalent

Number of long-term (vacant more than 3 months) radiography vacancies within all HPSS trusts as at 30 September 2003

HPSS organisation	*Headcount*	*WTE*[1]
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	2	1.5
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	0	0.0
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	3	2.5
Causeway HSS Trust	0	0.0
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	0	0.0
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	6	6.0
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	0	0.0
Foyle Community HSS Trust	0	0.0
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust	0	0.0
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	0	0.0
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	0	0.0
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	0	0.0
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	0	0.0
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	0	0.0
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	0	0.0
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	1	1.0
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	0	0.0
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	2	1.0
Total	14	12.0

[1] Whole time equivalent

Refuse Dumping

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions there have been between the Minister for the Environment and his counterpart in the Republic of Ireland, regarding the illegal dumping of refuse from the Republic of Ireland on the northern side of the border. [161678]

Angela Smith: A meeting with Martin Cullen TD, Minister for the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government has been scheduled for early April 2004 to discuss a range of waste management issues including cross-border movements of waste.

Segregation

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of facilitating segregation between Loyalist and Republican prisoners has been in the last 10 years; and what estimate he has made of future costs to maintain the system. [161682]

Jane Kennedy: The operation of segregated and normal regimes has not been costed separately over the last 10 years. The Prison Service expects to incur £9.5 million in additional resource expenditure during 2004–05 in order to accommodate the separation of Loyalist and Republican prisoners.

Taxis

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what sanctions are available to penalise taxi drivers who intentionally *(a)* turn off the meters in their vehicles and *(b)* overcharge passengers; and if he will make a statement. [161685]

Angela Smith: The current fleet of licensed taxis in Northern Ireland is approximately 6,400. Of these 255 (or 4 per cent.) are subject to fare regulation. Drivers of taxis whose fares are regulated must charge the hirer the metered fare when operating within a five mile radius of Belfast city centre. The only exception is if the taxi has been hired under 'special terms' for a period of time.

The penalty for infringement of the relevant By-Laws is a fine of £5. Also in serious cases the Department, following a conviction, has the power to suspend or revoke the taxi driver's licence. It is recognised the present level of fines for non-compliance with metering and charging requirements are not deterring offences. My officials are conducting an urgent review to introduce a more appropriate level of fines.

Teenage Mothers

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of births were to teenage mothers in each of the last 10 years, broken down by health board area. [161681]

Mr. Pearson: The following table gives the percentage of births that were to teenage mothers in each of the last 10 years, by Health and Social Services Board area.

Number of births to teenage mothers expressed as a percentage of all births, by year and Health and Social Services Board

	EHSSB	*NHSSB*	*SHSSB*	*WHSSB*
1993	7.0	6.7	5.1	6.3
1994	7.0	6.5	5.0	6.6
1995	6.9	5.3	4.3	7.1
1996	7.4	5.9	5.2	6.7
1997	8.0	6.4	4.9	7.0
1998	8.3	6.7	6.2	7.4
1999	8.7	7.3	5.9	8.8
2000	8.9	6.5	5.9	7.6
2001	8.1	6.5	5.6	6.8
2002	8.4	6.4	5.0	7.5

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Death Penalty

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have made to *(a)* Pakistan and *(b)* the United States of America regarding their use of the death penalty for people under the age of 18. [161066]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: With our EU partners, we make regular representations to the Pakistani Government on human rights issues including the use of the death penalty, most recently in June 2003.

We also make regular representations to the US, along with our EU partners, urging them to abolish the death penalty. On average, the EU makes representations to the US around once a month on individual cases.

We are particularly concerned about cases where the use of the death penalty contravenes customary international law, e.g. the execution of those who were juveniles at the time of the crime, and the execution of those suffering from mental retardation. We particularly urge the US to abandon this practice. Furthermore, we also raise the issue bilaterally with the US authorities.

Family Reunification (DNA Testing)

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make statement on the *(a)* DNA testing requirements, *(b)* DNA testing procedures and *(c)* the (i) normal and (ii) maximum

permitted timescales in respect of each stage of that procedure, for a child applying to be reunited under a family reunification application with a parent resident in the UK, where that child is resident in (A) Pakistan and (B) another country. [161226]

Mr. Mullin: The Government's DNA testing scheme for entry clearance applicants is available on a voluntary basis wholly paid for by UKvisas. It is used to establish family relationships in cases where other factors in an application have led the Entry Clearance Officer to doubt that the relationship between the applicant and the sponsor is as claimed.

A UK based firm is contracted to carry out the DNA tests on receipt of samples from the applicant and the sponsor in the UK. The applicant's sample is obtained by a qualified medical practitioner appointed by the visa section in the presence of a member of staff from our overseas diplomatic post. The UK sponsor's sample is obtained by an approved haematologist in the UK.

There are no set timescales for obtaining the samples from an applicant or sponsor. Timescales vary according to a number of factors, including the availability of the applicant or sponsor to provide a sample. The UK based firm is contracted to complete and return test results within 35 days of receipt of the samples. There are currently twice weekly sample collecting sessions at our High Commission in Islamabad, dealing with 80 to 90 applicants at each session. Sponsors are responsible for organising their own DNA sample collection in the UK. In 90 per cent. of cases worldwide, the test results are processed in the UK within 15 days of receipt of both samples. There is no separate breakdown for individual countries.

India

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the level of discrimination faced by Christians in the states of *(a)* Madhya Pradesh and *(b)* Gujarat; and what representations he has made to the Indian Government. [160125]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government are concerned about the religious violence against Christians, including the attacks that took place in Madhya Pradesh in January. We understand that the situation in Jhabua has now improved and that religious leaders and the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister have met to look at ways of improving inter-community relations. Our High Commission in New Delhi will continue to monitor the situation closely.

We condemned the religious related violence in Gujarat in 2002. The vast majority of victims were Muslim. We welcome the Government of India's assurances that they will take action to bring to justice the perpetrators of violence. However, we understand that, to date, there have been very few prosecutions. We have repeatedly voiced our concerns with the Indian authorities on this, and will continue to do so.

We raised our concerns with the Government of India about the attacks on Christians in Gujarat in 1999 at the time. Since then, violence against Christians in Gujarat has declined.

We provided immediate relief assistance to the victims of violence and we are now funding project work in Gujarat to encourage reconciliation between the worst affected communities.

We have raised the issue of rights of minorities with the Indian Government. We will continue to urge the Indian authorities to ensure the right to freedom of religion is upheld, and that those responsible for attacks on religious minorities are brought to justice.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of inter-religious violence in Orissa India with reference to the treatment of evangelical Christians. [160126]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We remain concerned about violence against Christians that has taken place in Orissa. Our High Commission in New Delhi will continue to monitor the situation closely and the Indian authorities are well aware of our commitment to human rights, including the right to freedom of religion.

We continue to urge the Indian authorities to ensure the right to freedom of religion is upheld, and that those responsible for attacks on religious minorities are brought to justice.

Maldives

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials of his Department last met members of the (i) Government of the Maldives and (ii) Maldivian Democratic Party; and what was discussed. [160667]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The last official meeting between Ministers was in 1999 when my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister visited the Maldives. Our High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, also accredited to the Maldives, met with the Maldives Deputy Foreign Minister in Colombo on 30 January this year. The High Commissioner will be visiting the Maldives later on this month, and will seek calls on the President, Foreign Minister, and Deputy Foreign Minister. Officials in London last met the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) on 24 February 2004. Our High Commission in Colombo has regular contact with MDP representatives, and the High Commissioner was the first Head of Mission to meet them on 8 January this year. The discussion with the Maldivian Foreign Ministers covered issues relating to small island states, and our bilateral relations. Discussions with MDP representatives covered MDP concerns about human rights and limitations on their ability to conduct political activity in the Maldives.

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received about the activities of the National Security Service of the Maldives; and what assessment he has made of these activities. [160674]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Maldivian Democratic Party has raised concerns with us regarding the activities of the National Security Service in the Maldives, particularly relating to its role during the civil disturbances in Male' on 19 and 20 September 2003. We

continue to monitor reports of human rights abuses in the Maldives, and are considering with our European partners what further action we might take.

Russia

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received from *(a)* Amnesty International and *(b)* the international community on gender-based violence in Russia; and if he will make a statement. [161944]

Mr. Rammell: We receive, and welcome representations from Amnesty International and other international and Russian NGOs on a wide range of human rights issues in the Russian Federation. During Amnesty's "Justice for All" campaign last year, which included gender-based violence in Russia, we worked very closely with the campaign manager and earlier this month we jointly hosted a successful workshop for UK and Russian NGOs which included discussion of women's rights.

Violence and discrimination against women remains a concern in Russia. The UK is currently funding the Moscow Helsinki Group to train a network of NGOs to respond to violations of women's rights. For the last 10 years, we have also supported a project in St. Petersburg, which trains NGOs and police officers in handling domestic violence.

Tibet

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* indigenous Tibetans and *(b)* Han Chinese in (i) the Tibetan Autonomous Region and (ii) Greater Tibet, based on the 1950 boundaries. [161732]

Mr. Rammell: Official figures for 2000 give the population of the Tibet Autonomous Region as 2.6 million of which 92.2 per cent. are Tibetans and 5.9 per cent. are Han Chinese. We have no other figures.

We continue to encourage the Chinese to ensure that economic development in Tibet does not adversely affect the Tibetan population. This includes ensuring that they benefit from economic growth including new jobs and the provision of housing, health and education facilities.

UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what ways the Government is carrying forward its commitment to the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. [161413]

Mr. Rammell: The United Kingdom ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1976 and since then the Government has continued to work to improve protections for economic and social rights, in line with the international legal obligations set out in the Covenant.

The Covenant contains a large number of rights which are properly the primary responsibility of a range of Government Departments. These include rights related to education, health, work, housing, clothing, food and culture. The role of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is primarily concerned with international processes dealing with these rights and with co-ordinating material for submission to the UN Committee which monitors treaty compliance. In this latter regard, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office ensures that the recommendations of the Committee are transmitted to those Departments with responsibilities for fulfilling the Covenant's obligations.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions the Government has had with the Government of South Africa on the export of electricity to Zimbabwe by Eskom; and if he will make a statement on energy supplies to Zimbabwe. [161232]

Mr. Mullin: The Government have regular discussions with the Government of South Africa about the situation in Zimbabwe. These have not included the export of electricity to Zimbabwe by Eskom.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which representative of the Zimbabwe Government approached his Department to seek assistance in respect of the trial of Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai. [161495]

Mr. Mullin: Mr J. Musawaka, Director of Public Prosecutions in the Attorney-General's Office, sought assistance from the Home Office in preparing for this trial. The Zimbabwean authorities were informed that the request would not be acceded to without written assurance that Tsvangirai would not be subjected to the death penalty if found guilty. The Zimbabwean authorities have not given us that assurance, and we have not offered them any assistance. The evidence stage of the trial has now finished.

WALES

Manufacturing

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Assembly Government on the manufacturing sector in Wales. [160262]

Mr. Touhig: Wales Office Ministers regularly discuss a range of issues with the Assembly Government, including those relating to the manufacturing sector. My most recent bilateral with Andrew Davies AM, Minister for Economic Development and Transport in the Assembly Government, was on 26 January 2004.

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many *(a)* solely state-financed and *(b)* public-private partnership and private finance initiative

projects for which his Department is responsible have been launched in each region in each of the last 10 years. [160957]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999. It has no such projects.

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was spent by *(a)* the Government on solely state-financed projects and *(b)* the (i) Government and (ii) private sector on public-private and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible in each of the last 10 years, broken down by region. [160958]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999. It has spent no money on such projects.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

CPS

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Solicitor-General if she will make a statement on the responsibility for oversight of the Crown Prosecution Service of *(a)* the Attorney-General and *(b)* the Home Secretary. [159297]

The Solicitor-General: Ministerial oversight of the independent Crown Prosecution Service rests solely with the Attorney-General, who has statutory responsibility for the superintendence of the Director of Public Prosecutions as Head of the Crown Prosecution Service (as provided for by section 3(1) of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985). The Law Officers Act 1997, provides that any function of the Attorney-General, including any statutory function, may also be exercised by myself as Solicitor-General.

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Solicitor-General what plans she has to change the name of the Crown Prosecution Service; and if she will make a statement. [159301]

The Solicitor-General: I would refer the hon. Member to my Statement of 3 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 901. The issue of a possible name change for the Crown Prosecution Service is under active consideration in the context of the changing role of the Service within the criminal justice system. The Director of Public Prosecutions is discussing this with his staff. When that process is complete, the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Attorney-General will announce their decision.

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Solicitor-General if she will make a statement on the basis on which the Director of Public Prosecutions advises the Home Secretary on the Crown Prosecution Service. [159347]

The Solicitor-General: The Director of Public Prosecutions and the Home Secretary, as with other Ministers and relevant senior officials, meet together from time to time to discuss criminal justice matters, including matters concerning the Crown Prosecution Service. They do so on the basis of their respective responsibilities for the operation and development of the criminal justice system.

Katharine Gun

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Solicitor-General what discussions the Attorney-General has had in the last 12 months with the Secretary of State for Defence on the Katharine Gun case. [158779]

The Solicitor-General: The Attorney-General when considering whether or not to grant consent to the prosecution of Katharine Gun for an offence under section 1 of the Official Secrets Act conducted a Shawcross exercise. He wrote to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in view of his departmental interest and copied it to other interested Ministerial colleagues, including the Secretary of State for Defence. This exercise is designed to enable the Attorney to be informed of Ministerial colleagues' views of the public interest considerations in the case that are within their particular Ministerial responsibilities. He took them into consideration when deciding whether to give his consent. The decision to consent to the prosecution was the Attorney-General's alone.

There have been no discussions between the Attorney-General and the Secretary of State for Defence over the Katharine Gun case in the last 12 months.

Mr. Cash: To ask the Solicitor-General pursuant to her answer of 2 March, what the evidential deficiency was to which she refers as reason in the case of Katharine Gun for having exercised discretion not to enter a nolle prosequi; and if she will lay the papers to which this relates, including those referred to by the Attorney-General in the House of Lords on 26 February, in the Library. [159190]

The Solicitor-General *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* The decision to offer no further evidence against Katharine Gun was made by the Crown Prosecution Service as an independent prosecuting authority. It was a decision taken solely on legal grounds and in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors. There was, in this case, a clear prima facie breach of section 1 of the Official Secrets Act 1989. However Senior Treasury Counsel prosecuting this case gave advice, with which the Director of Public Prosecutions fully concurred, that there was no longer a realistic prospect of convicting Katharine Gun. The evidential deficiency related to the prosecution's inability, within the current statutory framework, to disprove the defence of necessity to be raised on the particular facts of this case.

I am not sure what papers the hon. Member is referring to but counsels' advice etc are the subject of legal privilege and so it would not be appropriate for me to place them in the Library.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Equal Opportunities Commission

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Minister for Women what grants have been allocated to the Equal Opportunities Commission over the last five years; and if she will make a statement on changes in the level of funding during that time. [161921]

Ms Hewitt: The value of the grants paid to the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) in the four previous financial years is:

	£
1999–2000	6,782,000
2000–01	8,382,000
2001–02	8,742,300
2002–03	6,887,500

These figures have previously been laid before the House as part of the EOC Annual Report and Accounts.

The agreed level of funding for this year is £8,005,000.

The increase for 2000–01 and 2001–02 funded the EOC's modernisation programme allowing them to develop a more pro-active and strategic role in promoting equal opportunities for women and men.

This year, the EOC received an increase in funding for additional work on tackling the pay gap. This reflects the key role played by the EOC in helping the Government deliver on gender equality.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Commercial Radio Mergers

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how she will operate the public interest test in proposed commercial radio mergers. [161672]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

Draft guidance on the operation of the public interest merger provisions relating to newspaper and other media mergers—including commercial radio—has been the subject of a public consultation which closed on 12 March 2004. We are currently analysing the responses and intend to publish our response by 16 April 2004.

Digital Television

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what reports she has received from the Digital Televisions Consumer Expert Group. [161784]

Estelle Morris: None. We established the Digital Television Consumer Expert Group to help us review the criteria for switchover and to give their views on communications with consumers, equipment and installation issues, issues relating to the transitional stages and implementation of switchover and any regional issues. We have asked them to report by the end of March.

New Opportunities Fund (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money from the New Opportunities Fund was allocated to Chorley in each year since 1997; and how the money was spent. [161444]

Estelle Morris: The New Opportunities Fund began making grants in 1999.

The DCMS Lottery Awards Database, which uses information supplied by Lottery Distributors, shows that organisations based within the Chorley constituency have received 40 Lottery Awards. Of these, four were for projects specifically located within Chorley.

I am arranging for a full list of these awards to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Sports (Honours)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the honours which have been awarded to surviving members of the Great Britain Rugby League World Cup winning sides of *(a)* 1954 and *(b)* 1972; and if she will make a statement. [161215]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* Chris Hesketh, who played in the Rugby League World Cup of 1972, received an MBE in 1976.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many honours were awarded for sporting involvement or achievement in the last five years, broken down by sport. [161217]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* The number of honours awarded for services to sport, broken down by category, over the last 10 honours lists are set out in the following table.

	Number
Athletics	19
Bowls	3
Boxing	7
Cricket	11
Curling[1]	6
Cycling	3
Disabled Sport	27
Football (Association)	38
Football (Rugby)[2]	53
Golf	11
Hockey	5
Horse Racing	5
Martial Arts	3
Motor Cycling	6
Motor Racing	5
Rowing[3]	17
Equestrianism	3
Skating	3
Snooker	2
Swimming	6
Tennis	5
Yachting	7
General Sports Administration[4]	32
Other Sports[5]	34

[1] Includes five members of the 2000 Winter Olympics squad.

[2] Includes 39 members of the Rugby World Cup 2003; one for services to Rugby League; and two for services to both Rugby League and Rugby Union.).

[3] Includes 13 members of the 2000 Olympics squad.

[4] Incorporates such areas as: Youth Sports Trusts/Charities/ Councils, Dance and Leisure services, amenity management, Olympic and Commonwealth Games, sport medical associations.

[5] Among others: Angling, Archery, Badminton, Basketball, Canoeing, Gymnastics, Shooting, Mountaineering, Squash and Skiing.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Child Poverty

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether a family's ability to buy healthy food is taken into account in the Government's measurement of child poverty. [161909]

Mr. Pond: The document 'Measuring child poverty' was published in December 2003. It outlines the Government's measure of child poverty for the long term. This new measure will include indicators of low income and material deprivation. The report provides details of the questions which will form part of the material deprivation tier of the new child poverty measure and the basis on which they were selected. Copies of the document are available in the Library.

EU Enlargement

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether there is a website giving advice and guidance for citizens from EU accession states wishing to work in the UK from 1 May; and if he will make a statement. [161982]

Mr. Pond: There is currently advice available for citizens of the EU accession states on the "working in the UK" website; www.workingintheuk.gov.uk/working_in_the_uk/en/homepage/your_status/european_citizens.html

Further guidance, including application forms will be made available on the Home Office and "Working in the UK" websites in advance of 1 May.

Maternity Allowance

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost to his Department of administering Maternity Allowance was *(a)* in total and *(b)* per claimant in the last year for which figures are available. [158080]

Maria Eagle: Information is not available in the format requested. The Department now accounts for its administration and benefit expenditure by Strategic Objective, as set out in its Public Service Agreements (PSA), and by individual Requests for Resources (RfRs), as set out in the Departmental Estimates and Accounts.

Pension Credit

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Pension Credit recipients have reported a significant and material change in their circumstances in each month since October 2003; and of these, how many subsequently *(a)* have had their claims reassessed, *(b)* have had their awards (i) increased, (ii) decreased and (iii) withdrawn and *(c)* are still waiting for their notifications to be processed. [160350]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the form requested. The table shows numbers of changes reported by Pension Credit recipients between October 2003 and January 2004, rounded to the nearest five. The numbers of 'changes reported' and 'changes outstanding' include all changes reported by customers, including some which required no action. The numbers of 'changes processed' include any change which required action. These include some minor changes, such as a change in address, which did not affect a customer's award. The number of changes currently outstanding is considered to be a normal head of work.

Information on the outcome of reported changes is not currently available.

Pension credit: changes of circumstances reported by customers—October 2003 to January 2004

	October 2003	*November 2003*	*December 2003*	*January 2004*
Changes reported	203,905	273,740	254,705	396,295
Changes processed	108,765	215,055	202,540	413,105
Changes outstanding	96,370	155,050	207,220	190,410

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Pension Credit applications have been made *(a)* through the pension credit application line, *(b)* in writing, *(c)* via the internet, *(d)* through a home visit, *(e)* through a local Pension Service surgery and *(f)* by another method. [160353]

Malcolm Wicks: A total of 841,000 Pension Credit applications had been received by 29 February. Of these, 703,000 were made through the Pension Credit application line and 138,000 were made on a paper application form obtained by some other means. Of the latter, 58,000 were made as a result of a home visit. It is not possible to say how many applications were made through a local service surgery. Applications for Pension Credit cannot be made via the internet, although the application form can be downloaded from the Pension Service website.

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 1,000.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received concerning shortages of paper versions of the Pension Credit application pack; what discussions he has held with affected organisations; and if he will make a statement. [160676]

Malcolm Wicks: We have received no such representations this year and there is no shortage of Pension Credit paper application packs. In January, the Chief Executive of The Pension Service wrote to the Chief Executives of Age Concern, Citizens Advice, Help the Aged, the Local Government Association, the RNIB and the RNID to explain that supplies of paper applications packs are available through the local service of The Pension Service and that the application form can be downloaded from The Pension Service website. There will be a new version of the application pack from April.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 320W, on Pension Credit, how many home visits involving Pension Credit have been undertaken in each local authority cluster in each month since the Pension Service was created. [160510]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in precisely the form requested. Tables have been placed in the Library showing the number of home visits

undertaken by the local service of The Pension Service in each local service cluster in Great Britain between April 2003 and January 2004. All visits undertaken since April 2003 have covered pension credit. Work is in hand to revise local service cluster boundaries to align them with local authority boundaries.

Pension Surgeries

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many regular pension service drop-in and appointment surgeries have been established *(a)* in each region, *(b)* in each local authority cluster, *(c)* in each constituency and *(d)* in total. [160351]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not available in the format requested.

The information that is available is the number of surgeries offering appointments and a drop-in facility and the number of surgeries offering appointment only in each region, and is provided in the following table.

Region	*Number of surgeries offering both appointments and a drop-in facility*	*Number of surgeries offering appointments only*
South West	200	31
South East	303	22
London	146	63
East Midlands	451	72
West Midlands	294	18
Wales	133	29
North West	209	27
North East	197	103
Scotland	0	268
Total	1,933	633

Details of local service surgeries can be obtained by telephoning the single 'lo call' access number for The Pension Service, which is 0845 60 60 265. Locally surgery information is often available in libraries, GP surgeries, and advertised in the local press and radio.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Administration Proceedings

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the transparency of the position of the administrator in administration proceedings. [161728]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* Administration is a collective insolvency proceeding in which the administrator must act in the interests of the creditors as a whole.

The administrator's proposals for achieving the purpose of the administration are subject to the approval of creditors. The administrator is under a duty to report to the creditors on a regular basis, furthermore the creditors can form a committee, which allows them to perform a more active role in overseeing the proceedings.

The administrator's actions are open to challenge by the creditors, if they can satisfy the court that the administrator has acted, or proposes to act, in a way that prejudices or unfairly harms their interests.

Archiving Technology

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what responsibility her Department has in developing *(a)* permanent, *(b)* secure and *(c)* digital archiving technology; and if she will make a statement. [160666]

Mr. Timms: The Department of Trade and Industry encourages the development of digital archiving technologies, and provides some financial assistance towards collaborative research projects involving business and universities in this field.

Beer

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken to ensure that beer drinkers receive a full pint of liquid. [162004]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department intends to consult later this year on proposals to consolidate and modernise weights and measures controls on the sale of foods, including draught beer.

British Nuclear Fuels

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) pursuant to her answer of 11 March 2004, *Official Report,* column 1675W, on British Nuclear Fuels, what discussions officials have had with BNFL about the fixed price contract for nuclear clean-up in Oak Ridge, Tennessee; [161973]

(2) if she will make a statement on the use of fixed price contracts for the clean-up of radioactively contaminated sites by BNFL. [161974]

Mr. Timms: BNFL Inc. entered into certain fixed price clean-up contracts with US DoE at the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Plant (AMWTP) in Idaho and the East Tennessee Technology Park (ETTP) in Oak Ridge a number of years ago. Some losses on those contracts have been reported in BNFL's annual report. BNFL Inc's focus is now on contracts which pose minimal risk, and it already has a number of these contracts in place and they are making a useful contribution to the group.

BNFL is taking steps to limit any further losses under the two historic legacy contracts and, in liaison with officials, is actively pursuing claims for compensation under the terms of those contracts. I have also discussed this issue with US Energy Secretary, Spencer Abraham.

Building Standards

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what action her Department is taking to tackle rogue builders; [161507]

(2) what steps her Department is taking to *(a)* promote awareness of the Quality Mark scheme among the public and *(b)* encourage applications from building firms; [161509]

(3) how many building firms in *(a)* England and *(b)* Kent have (i) applied for and (ii) been granted membership of the Quality Mark scheme for builders. [161508]

Nigel Griffiths: The Government are working with the construction industry, local authorities, consumer groups and other stakeholders to introduce the Quality Mark scheme.

The scheme was initially piloted in Birmingham and Somerset in 2001. A series of trade launches have since been held in other parts of the country. Registration fees for most firms have been subsidised and free advice on entry requirements is available to applicants.

Records show that a total of 535 firms have been approved so far, 507 of which are located in England including 25 in Kent. A total of 699 firms have applied, of which 694 are based in England including 22 in Kent.

Business Start-Ups (London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses have received assistance in starting-up from Government schemes and initiatives in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in each year from 1992, broken down by type. [158459]

Jacqui Smith: Business Link for London is the main provider of Government funding assistance for start-up businesses within the Greater London area. Other schemes are administered by national and regional organisations and it is not possible to provide figures in the format requested without disproportionate cost.

Business Link for London's (BL4L) records show that up to Quarter 3 of 2003–04 they have given advice/support to 23,033 pre-start ups. During 2002–03 they gave advice/support to 11,466 pre-starts. Earlier figures are unavailable.

A breakdown of pre-start ups, including pre-start registrations in London boroughs during 2003–04 is detailed on the following table.

The London Development Agency (LDA) also has programmes designed to support business, small firms or new start-ups. The LDA also focus on the needs of strategic businesses that are large employers in the local economy, which sometimes need help in identifying problems at an early stage.

In 2001–02 the LDA was responsible for creating 2,073 new businesses to the London economy. In 2002–03, 1,443 businesses were created. To the end of the third quarter of 2003–04, the LDA had added 536 businesses to the London economy, against a target of 900. Current projections are that 1,357 businesses will have been created by the end of the reporting year in March 2004.

London borough, pre-starts 2003–04

Borough	*Number of pre-starts assisted*
Barking and Dagenham	50
Barnet	277
Bexley	85
Brent	239
Bromley	162
Camden	276
City of London	32
Croydon	299
Ealing	257
Enfield	379
Greenwich	110
Hackney	202
Hammersmith and Fulham	169
Haringey	228
Harrow	154
Havering	54
Hillingdon	135
Hounslow	183
Islington	292
Kensington and Chelsea	145
Kingston upon Thames	115
Lambeth	260
Lewisham	225
Merton	133
Newham	229
Redbridge	205
Richmond upon Thames	157
Southwark	246
Sutton	100
Tower Hamlets	175
Waltham Forest	201
Wandsworth	225
Westminster	537
Not known	15,809
Total	7,224

Clean Coal Technology

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what incentives she has planned to encourage investment in clean coal technology. [161610]

Mr. Timms: The Cleaner Coal Technology Programme has already committed some £9 million of Government support for R&D which will have generated some £27 million of investment into cleaner coal technologies between 1999 and 2006. In addition to this, we have recently announced a new call for proposals under the Programme which will provide another £4 million of Government support for CCT R&D. Under the Programme, we also support British businesses with Technology Transfer and Export Promotion projects with particular emphasis on countries such as China, India and Russia.

Coal Mining

Mr. Denis Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people have been employed in the coal mining industry from 1954 to date. [160939]

Mr. Timms: The following table shows numbers of people employed underground in National Coal Board/ British Coal Corporation in each year from 1954 until privatisation in 1994. The figures for these years do not include for employment at private mines. The figures for 1995 onwards are for total number of different persons employed (including contractors) in all deep mines.

Opencast mine employment statistics are not readily available for the full period, but Coal Authority figures show that as at 31 December 2003, 2,175 people were employed in opencast mines, this figure having stood at 3,863 on 31 March 1996, at the end of the first year for which the authority maintained these records.

Thousand

	Number of people employed in deep mines
1954	707
1955	704
1956	703
1957	710
1958	699
1959	665
1960	607
1961	575
1962	556
1963	528
1964	502
1965	455
1966	422
1967	390
1968	331
1969	306
1970	290
1971	286
1972	274
1973	252
1974	253
1975	252
1976	250
1977	248
1978	240
1979	242
1980	237
1981	172
1982	164
1983	148
1984	139
1985	114
1986	91
1987	75
1988	69
1989	56

	Thousand
	Number of people employed in deep mines
1990	49
1991	38
1992	28
1993	10
1994	7
1995	12
1996	10
1997	14
1998	11
1999	10
2000	9
2001	9
2002	8
2003	6

Source:
Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics.

Competitiveness Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the outcome was of the Competitiveness Council on 11 March; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [161941]

Ms Hewitt: I represented the UK at the EU Competitiveness Council in Brussels on 11 March 2004.

The Competitiveness Council's contribution to the spring European Council was adopted. These conclusions covered the following priorities: integrated approach to competitiveness; enhanced competition through better functioning markets; regulatory reform; industry challenges and opportunities; research and innovation; employment and labour market reform; and mid term review of Lisbon agenda.

Council conclusions were adopted on stimulating entrepreneurship, business related services, and basic research.

No agreement was reached on the regulation for the community patent. The Presidency concluded, with disappointment, that they would have to carefully consider the next steps.

There was a Presidency progress report on REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals), and on the regulation for administrative co-operation in the enforcement of consumer protection laws.

An extension of the temporary defence mechanism for shipbuilding was agreed. This is an extension of the measure until the WTO dispute, between the Community and Korea, is settled.

The Presidency announced that the European Parliament had accepted the Council's amendments to the enforcement of intellectual property rights directive, and announced that the directive will shortly be adopted by written procedure.

The proposed directive for an internal market in services was discussed. I congratulated the Commission on this initiative, which should increase competition to the benefit of consumers and make manufacturing more competitive by reducing companies' costs.

There was an exchange of views on European space policy.

Energy Industry

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total value of tax reliefs and subsidies was in each year since 1990 for use in *(a)* nuclear, *(b)* oil, *(c)* gas, *(d)* electricity and *(e)* renewable industries. [157408]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 3 March 2004]:* The information is as follows:

Tax relief

In arriving at the tax which companies pay on their profits, a range of reliefs apply, some of which are specific to particular taxes while others only apply under certain circumstances. The range of tax reliefs that can apply to oil, gas and generation of electricity (including through renewables) includes capital allowances; exemptions from the climate change levy; the R&D tax credit; and specific treatment for British Energy, and the North Sea oil and gas industry.

The main tax reliefs and their costs are listed in the December 2003 Tax Ready Reckoner and Tax Reliefs, which is available in the Library of the House and is published by HM Treasury at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media//AAB24/pbr03_trr.pdf. Aggregate figures for the economy-wide costs of the minor direct tax reliefs can be found on the Inland Revenue's website at http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/tax_expenditures/menu.htm.

Given the range of activities undertaken by companies, to collect figures for the costs of tax reliefs given to specific industries would be too burdensome on business. It is only possible to provide such figures where tax reliefs apply solely to a specific sector (such as reliefs against petroleum revenue tax which is granted only to the North Sea oil and gas companies).

The Government have made the following specific provisions for the nuclear, oil, gas, electricity and renewables industries:

(a) Nuclear

The Government made provision in section 4 of the Electricity (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act for a tax disregard in respect of its proposed restructuring aid to British Energy. As the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said in her statement to the House on 3 June 2003, the tax disregard, estimated at £0.9 billion, will not result in any extra cost to the Government. It has been provided to avoid a large tax charge hitting British Energy as a result of the proposed aid and thus the need for the aid to be correspondingly higher to achieve the same effect.

(b) and (c) Oil and Gas

Information on reliefs against petroleum revenue tax granted to North Sea oil and gas companies for 2002–03 and 2003–04 can be obtained from table 7 of the December 2003 Tax Ready Reckoner. Figures are published twice a year and figures for earlier years can be obtained from the Library of the House. These reliefs are given against PRT only. Information on the PRT payments made by oil and gas companies is contained in Table 11.12 of the Inland Revenue's corporate tax statistics, at http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/corporate_tax/menu.htm.

(d) Electricity

The climate change levy was introduced in April 2001. In view of their environmental benefits, the Government announced that electricity from good quality combined heat and power plants (CHP) sold via licensed electricity suppliers would be exempt from the climate change levy. This exemption took effect from 1 April 2003. Electricity generated from coal mine methane (CMM) was also exempted for the same reason in November 2003. The cost of the exemption for good quality CHP is estimated at £15 million per year from 2003–04, and for CMM less than £3 million from November 2003 to April 2004 (recorded as a negligible cost to the Exchequer).

(e) Renewables

From introduction of the Climate Change Levy in April 2001, there were exemptions for electricity generated by new renewables such as wind and solar energy. These exemptions are estimated to have cost the Exchequer around £20 million per year from 2001–02 onwards.

Subsidies

Information about the total value of subsidies in each year since 1990 for use in nuclear, oil, gas, electricity and renewable industries are set out in the following table.

Support provided through the Non Fossil Fuel Obligation and the Renewables Obligation are not Government subsidies.

£ million

	Nuclear	*Oil*	*Gas*	*Electricity*		*Renewables*	
	(a)	*(b)*	*(c)*	*(d)*	*(e)*	*(f)*	*(g)*
1990–91	1,265	0	0	0	21.3	6.1	0
1991–92	798	0	0	0	24.8	11.7	0
1992–93	864	0	0	0	26.6	28.9	0
1993–94	895	0	0	0	26.8	68.1	0
1994–95	892	0	0	0	20.5	96.4	0
1995–96	699	0	0	0	21.6	94.5	0
1996–97	0	0	0	0	18.5	109	0
1997–98	0	0	0	0	15.9	115.9	0
1998–99	0	0	0	0	14.4	113.7	0
1999–2000	0	0	0	0	14.9	41.9	0
2000–01	0	0	0	0	15.9	52.1	0
2001–02	0	0	0	0	24.1	70.2	0
2002–03	0	0	0	0	48.1	—	[1]277.9

[1] Gross est.

Notes:

Column (a):

Figures are based on the premium received by Nuclear Electric plc over and above the market price for electricity in the period 1990–96. Grant in aid payments to UKAEA have not been included. These payments were to fund research and development in nuclear fusion which is likely to be many years from commercial exploitation, and to discharge UKAEA's own nuclear liabilities which arose from proving their technology rather than for commercial objectives. All UKAEA's reactors were experimental, and all are now closed.

The Government are supporting the restructuring of British Energy on the terms set out in the Secretary of State's announcement of 28 November 2002, including making available to the company a credit facility, up to a maximum of £200 million. There are currently no outstanding drawings on the facility.

Column (e):

These figures show direct Government funding for capital grants, research and development on renewable energy through the DTIs Sustainable Energy programme and through Research Councils.

Column (f):

This column shows expenditure through the Non Fossil Fuel Obligation (NFFO) for England and Wales.

Column (g):

The figure of £277.9 million for 2002–03 represents the value of the equivalent of the total Obligation on suppliers of 3 per cent. of electricity supplied. This equals 9,261,568 Renewables Obligation Certificates (ROCs) at the buy-out value of £30 per MWh. This figure includes the value of NFFO ROCs for which there was a surplus of £57.6 million in 2002–03.

Energy Suppliers (Disconnections)

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* guidance and *(b)* instruction is given to domestic energy suppliers on disconnection of vulnerable consumers from supply during the winter period; and what action is required of suppliers in terms of reconnecting vulnerable households in readiness for the winter period. [160246]

Mr. Timms: The regulation of gas and electricity supply, including any guidance or instruction to suppliers, is the responsibility of the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem). Under their licences, suppliers are required to prepare and submit for Ofgem's approval a Code of Practice and Guidance for dealing with customers in difficulty. In their codes, suppliers are required to set out ways in which they will

seek to avoid the disconnection of premises occupied by customers with payment difficulties. In addition, suppliers are required, so far as possible, to avoid the disconnection of pensionable, disabled or chronically sick customers with payment difficulties between October and March. I understand that Ofgem is in discussion with suppliers about improving disconnection arrangements, particularly as they apply to vulnerable customers. These discussions will cover a range of matters affecting disconnections, including arrangements for re-connection.

Holiday Clubs

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of *(a)* the legal protection afforded to people who become involved in holiday clubs which fail to deliver what is promised, and *(b)* how it compares with the protection afforded to people who purchase time shares; and if she will make a statement. [161964]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Timeshare legislation generally does not apply to holiday clubs. The European Commission plan to Review the Timeshare Directive (94/47/EC), which would provide the opportunity to extend the scope of the Directive to holiday clubs. My officials are visiting Brussels this month to discuss the status and timing of this Review.

The unfair Commercial Practices Directive, which is currently under negotiation, is expected to provide protection against two aspects of holiday club scams—pressure selling and misleading offers. In addition, existing legislation covering misleading advertising, distance selling, as well as contract law could, in certain circumstances, apply to holiday clubs.

Miners' Compensation

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the differences between compensation for pension loss in mining compensation claims made using the interim pensions spreadsheet and those using the final version of the calculator. [159523]

Nigel Griffiths: None.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many claims for compensation have been lodged by former mineworkers for injuries sustained while handling explosives during the course of their work; how many claims have been successful; and how much compensation has been awarded for such claims in each of the last 10 years. [159869]

Nigel Griffiths: Around 200 claims for nitro-glycerine headaches have been settled.

These are subject to a confidentiality agreement between the British Coal Corporation and the solicitor representing some of the claimants.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on compensation available for former NCB workers who have sustained injuries whilst handling explosives during the course of their work. [159870]

Nigel Griffiths: Compensation for former NCB workers who have sustained injuries whilst handling explosives during the course of their work are personal injury claims and are handled on a Common Law basis.

Nirex

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 11 March 2004, *Official Report,* column 1683W, on Nirex, what the last date was on which the Department discussed the budget for Nirex with *(a)* BNFL and *(b)* British Energy. [161969]

Mr. Timms: The financing of Nirex was raised in very broad terms at a routine quarterly meeting on 5 March between BNFL and several departments including DTI and at a meeting on 9 March between British Energy and this department.

Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the *(a)* role and *(b)* powers of the Nuclear and Coal Liabilities unit; when the unit was established; and what its complement of staff is, excluding secondees. [161818]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* The Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit (NCLU) is an administrative directorate within the DTI and has no independent powers in its own right. It is responsible for the effective clean-up of the nuclear power industry and for meeting residual liabilities for the Coal Mining industry. In particular, it is currently creating the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and managing the Government relationships with British Nuclear Fuels Limited, British Energy plc and the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority. It is also responsible for administering coal health claims, the coal industry pension schemes, the relationship with the Coal Authority and the concessionary fuel scheme.

The NCLU was created in 2002. It currently has a staff of 76 excluding secondees.

Post Office Closures (Tesco)

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what date the Post Office was notified by Tesco of the proposed closure of the sub-post office on Lisieux Way, Taunton. [161900]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 16 March 2004]*: I understand from Post Office Ltd. that formal written notice from Tesco was received on 3 March 2004.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what (1) assessment the Post Office has made of *(a)* Tesco's decision to close a number of post offices and *(b)* the impact it will have on the Network Re-invention proposals in *(a)* England and *(b)* Somerset; [161901]

(2) what discussions the Post Office has had with Tesco plc on their policy of closure of post offices in stores formerly run by T & S Stores plc. [161904]

Mr. Timms: *[holding answers 16 March 2004]*: Discussions have been held between Post Office Ltd. and Tesco to determine what future plans Tesco has for its estate of stores containing post offices. Tesco is undertaking a site-by-site review, and in a minority of locations where they establish a Tesco Express format and the site is not consequently large enough also to operate a Post Office branch, they may wish to terminate the Post Office contract for the site in question.

In its review, Tesco is committed to working closely with Post Office Ltd. and regular discussions are held.

The removal of a post office branch from a Tesco owned store is not a permanent closure and Post Office Ltd. has given assurances that, where there remains a need for post office provision, it will look to relocate, in the same vicinity, offices that Tesco want to remove from its stores. Post Office Ltd. will consider whether to relocate or permanently close those offices on an individual basis.

Any proposals for the permanent removal of post office provision can only be made by Post Office Ltd. in the context of a lack of viability, and requires a period of public consultation as agreed between Post Office Ltd. and the consumer body Postwatch before a decision is reached. At the end of its current programme to restructure the urban post office network, Post Office Ltd. will ensure that there will be a post office within a mile of at least 95 per cent. of the urban population nationally

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many former T & S Stores plc post offices have been closed by Tesco since it took over T & S Stores plc; [161902]

(2) how many post offices there were in T & S Stores plc before takeover by Tesco plc. [161903]

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices that Tesco announced would be closed since it took over T&S Stores have since been reprieved by Tesco. [161862]

Mr. Timms *[holding answers 16 March 2004]*: Tesco acquired the T&S Group chain of convenience stores in October 2002 when in total 318 T&S stores trading under the 'One Stop' and 'Billons' contained Post Office branches.

In taking over T&S, Tesco took over the Post Office contracts for the individual sites and has since been reviewing how many of these Post Offices will be retained. Tesco has committed to giving six months notice of its intention to terminate any contract, allowing Post Office Ltd. sufficient opportunity to find alternative partners to continue to offer post office services in close proximity to the existing location, and to working with all parties to seek a smooth changeover process for customers in the area where there remains a need for post office provision.

As Post Office Ltd. has operational responsibility for the post office network, only it can propose permanent closure of a post office branch. I understand from the company that, to date, Tesco has given notice of its decision to terminate the post office contract in respect of 38 locations. In all cases the period of notice for withdrawing from the contract is still running and no closures have yet taken place. Any reversal of such a decision would be a commercial and operational matter for Tesco and Post Office Ltd.

Postwatch/Postwatch Scotland

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether Postwatch Scotland is required to inform relevant stakeholders about *(a)* the lodging of an objection to a post office closure and *(b)* the withdrawal of such an objection. [161454]

Mr. Timms: There is no formal requirement for Postwatch to inform key stakeholders about the lodging of an objection to a post office closure and subsequent developments. But I understand that it is Postwatch policy to reply to key stakeholders who have contacted it about closure proposals and that Postwatch Scotland has written to the hon. Member.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will break down, by programme, the budget for renewable energy for the period 2002–03 to 2005–06. [162046]

Mr. Timms: The DTI has announced £348 million of support for renewable energy for this period.

Not all of this expenditure has yet been allocated to specific projects or programmes, but the following major allocations have been made:

£19 million per year for research, development, demonstration and promotion of renewable energy technologies

Offshore wind capital grants—£117 million

Biomass capital grants—£66 million

Photovoltaics demonstration programme—£25 million

Community and household projects—£10 million

Wave and tidal projects—£5 million

Embedded generation projects—£5 million.

The figure of £348 million does not include Defra planting grants for energy crops or expenditure by the Research Councils on renewable energy related academic research.

Royal Mail Services

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the Royal Mail's postage paid service in relation to *(a)* the fine imposed by Postcomm for next day delivery rate between April 2002 and March 2003 and *(b)* the drop in performance in next day delivery rate for the same service between April and December 2003, as cited in the Postcomm document dated 2 March. [161679]

Mr. Timms: The Postal services Act 2000 enables Postcomm to take enforcement action against Royal Mail where it believes it is likely to breach its licence obligation. A final order was issued in December 2002 requiring Royal Mail to use all reasonable endeavours to achieve its licence targets for 1st Class Postage Paid Impression and Response Services. These are both

business products. Following Royal Mail's publication of its end of year results in May 2003, which showed that it had failed to achieve both these targets, Postcomm reached the view that Royal Mail had breached its licence and imposed a financial penalty in respect of this breach.

I understand that with regard to performance in 2003–04, the first six months showed an overall improvement. Due to Industrial Action and a major fire at Northampton Mail Centre in Quarter 3 (Oct-Dec 2003), there was a serious deterioration in performance. Postcomm will consider what action should be taken against Royal Mail, which may include enforcement or imposition of financial penalties, once they have received Royal Mail's end of year results at the end of May 2004.

Small Business Research

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many regional development agencies have established links with the Small Business Research Initiative; and what the nature of the co-operation is in each case. [160141]

Nigel Griffiths: The Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) is a procurement measure designed to make it easier for smaller companies to win contracts for Government-funded research which will help them grow their businesses. The participants in SBRI are those Government Departments with significant spends on R&D, and the Research Councils, rather than RDAs.

Trade Unions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make it her policy to propose legislation to provide for *(a)* the right of trade unions to extend collective bargaining issues to include pensions, equality and training, *(b)* the right to be represented by a union representative in grievance and disciplinary hearings, *(c)* employment rights starting from the first day of employment, *(d)* the removal of thresholds required to be achieved to win trade union recognition, *(e)* recognition rights to companies of less than 21 workers, *(f)* a guaranteed right to strike without being in breach of contract, *(g)* qualifying criteria for non-independent unions to meet in order to gain recognition in an organisation, *(h)* an increase in penalties for those companies refusing to comply with reinstatement orders from tribunals and *(i)* the right of workers to be represented by the union of their choice; and if she will make a statement. [161965]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government's policy in this area is set out in our Review of the Employment Relations Act 1999. Copies of the public consultation document (published in February 2003) and the Government response to consultation (published last December) are available in the Libraries of the House. Those findings of the Review that require primary legislation are being taken forward in the Employment Relations Bill currently before the House.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Airguns

Mr. Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what estimate he has made of the number of owners of self-contained gas cartridge airguns who will apply for licences before becoming liable for prosecution under the terms of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003; [161733]

(2) what organisations he has met to discuss publicising the recent change in the law on self-contained gas cartridge airguns; [161741]

(3) what guidance he has issued to the police regarding the prosecution of those unaware that they will require a licence for possession of a self-contained gas cartridge airgun; [161751]

(4) which manufacturers of self-contained gas cartridge airguns have been sent publicity material by his Department on the recent change in the law on self-contained gas cartridge airguns; and how many posters and leaflets have been sent in each case; [161746]

(5) what information he has collated on the length of time it takes the police to process an application to license a self-contained gas cartridge airgun; [161747]

(6) how many posters and leaflets on the change in the law on self-contained gas cartridge airguns have been sent by his Department to *(a)* the British Association of Shooting and Conservation, *(b)* the National Small-bore Rifle Association, *(c)* the National Rifle Association, *(d)* the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association, *(e)* the Countryside Alliance, *(f)* the Airgun Manufacturers Trade Association, *(g)* the British Field Target Association, *(h)* the British Airgun Shooters Association, *(i)* the Gun Trade Association and *(j)* the Sportsman's Association; [161742]

(7) if he will extend the deadline for the coming into force of the recent change in the law on self-contained gas cartridge airguns to allow for extended publicity of the change in the law; [161735]

(8) how much funding his Department *(a)* allocated and *(b)* spent on publicising the recent change in the law on self-contained gas cartridge airguns; [161736]

(9) what information he has collated on the number of applications for licences to own self-contained gas cartridge airguns received by the police in each of the last five years, broken down by constabulary; [161748]

(10) when the provisions in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 relating to self-contained gas cartridge airguns will come into force; [161743]

(11) what the *(a)* minimum and *(b)* maximum penalties are for possession of a self-contained gas cartridge airgun under the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003; [161744]

(12) what information he has collated on the number of self-contained gas cartridge airguns handed into the police for destruction in each of the last five years, broken down by constabulary; [161749]

(13) what estimate he has made of the number of self-contained cartridge airguns in the United Kingdom; [161737]

(14) what discussions he has had with *(a)* the police and *(b)* the Court Service regarding the number of prosecutions for possession of an unlicensed self-contained gas cartridge airgun that can be expected after the relevant provisions in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 come fully into force; [161750]

(15) if he will list the manufacturers of self-contained gas cartridge airguns that have been sold in the UK; and what estimate he has made of how many such airguns have been sold by each manufacturer since 1989; [161745]

(16) what discussions his Department has had with Brococks to determine the number of self-contained gas cartridge airguns they have sold in the UK since 1989; [161738]

(17) whether the publicity material for the recent change in the law on self-contained gas cartridge airguns was also produced in Welsh. [161752]

Caroline Flint: A ban on the manufacture and sale of self-contained gas cartridge (SCGC) guns came into force on 20 January 2004. A ban on the possession of the guns comes into force on 30 April 2004. Anyone who possessed one on 20 January has until 30 April to apply for a firearms certificate if they wish to keep it. Unlawful possession of a SCGC gun carries a minimum sentence of five years and a maximum of 10 years imprisonment.

We estimated in our Regulatory Impact Assessment for the ban that between 50,000 and 70,000 SCGC guns had been sold in the UK. This was based on discussions between the Home Office and Brocock Ltd., who were the main importer/distributor of SCGC guns and who manufacture the cartridges they use. Not all of this number will still be in circulation and it is not possible at this stage to say how many will be certificated or surrendered. However, we will be collecting this information from the police after the 30 April deadline. SCGC guns were not previously subject to control and therefore none were certificated prior to the ban. It will not be possible therefore to say how many might have been destroyed or otherwise disposed of before the new laws came into effect.

We estimated in our RIA that there would be about 15 prosecutions for unlawful possession of SCGC guns. A Home Office circular was issued to the police on 14 January giving guidance on the ban. No specific guidance was offered on prosecutions and we expect the police to consider each case on its merits.

The ban has been widely publicised. It was announced in a press release and other publicity material for the Anti-social Behaviour Act, and was mentioned in the national media. More detailed coverage was given by the shooting press. After discussion with the police and the Gun Trade Association (GTA), the Home Office produced a range of publicity material explaining what owners must do if they want to keep their guns. A total of 2,500 posters and 50,000 leaflets were sent to police forces for display and further distribution as they saw fit. Another 2,400 posters and 240,000 leaflets were sent to GTA members and to other retailers likely to have stocked SCGC guns, together with 120,000 stickers to put on tins of air gun pellets. This was a national campaign and publicity material was not produced in Welsh. However, we are looking at what other publicity is necessary before the 30 April deadline and will consider the need for producing material in Welsh if this cannot be dealt with locally.

In addition to money spent on publicising the new powers contained in the Anti-social Behaviour Act, we have so far spent 6,700 on the posters, leaflets and stickers related to the SCGC controls.

We have allowed over three months for owners to apply for a certificate or to surrender their guns and do not think it necessary to extend that period. Although the length of time to process applications will vary between forces, this will not affect applicants. Anyone who applies before 30 April will not be liable for prosecution even if their application remains outstanding on that date or is the subject of an appeal.

Mr. Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what information he has collated on the number of self-contained gas cartridge airguns converted to fire live ammunition which have been recovered by the police in each of the last five years for which figures are available; [161739]

(2) what information he has collated on the number of people *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured by self-contained gas cartridge airguns converted to fire live ammunition in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [161740]

Caroline Flint: This information is not available centrally but I have arranged for the Forensic Science Service to interrogate their National Firearms Forensic Intelligence Database and will write to my hon. Friend with the results.

Animal Experiments

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many meetings the Home Office Inspectorate has held in the last six months at which discussions were held about scientific issues related to the use of animals in experiments; what plans the Home Office Inspectorate has to hold such discussions in the next six months; and what plans it has to invite organisations which argue scientifically against animal-based research for discussions. [158784]

Caroline Flint: The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate does not normally host or take a lead role in public meetings or meetings with external organisations on behalf of the Department, and there are no plans for it to do so.

However, members of the Inspectorate are frequently involved in and contribute to Home Office and third-party meetings and events at which there is discussion of the use of animals in scientific procedures. These include twice yearly Inspectorate conferences to which guest speakers contribute, and meetings of expert groups considering specific topics, seminars and workshops on

a range of issues (including meetings run by, or with contributions from, organisations that argue scientifically against animal-based research). The Inspectorate also participates in other local, national and international events (for example the Fourth World Congress on Alternatives).

This will continue as an integral part of the Inspectorate's role, and will go on entailing dialogue with people and organisations covering a wide spectrum of opinion on use of animals in science. The Chief Inspector will for example be addressing MPs at a parliamentary event scheduled for 23 March 2004.

The organisations to be invited to particular meetings or events in which the Inspectorate participates is determined by the specific nature of the occasion and the objectives of the organisers.

ASBOs

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many anti-social behaviour orders have been issued by *(a)* Hampshire Police and *(b)* local authorities in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight in each of the last three years. [160800]

Ms Blears: The police and local authorities have been able to apply for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) since their introduction on 1 April 1999. The Police Reform Act (2002) authorised the magistrates' courts and the Crown court to issue ASBOs on conviction, and the County courts (from 1 April 2003), to issue ASBOs on application. Data are given in the table of numbers of ASBOs issued, at all courts, within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, up to 30 September 2003 (latest available).

Data are collected on the type of applicant only on those orders issued in the magistrates' court, acting in its civil capacity, and within the County courts. Orders can also be made following conviction of an offence in the criminal courts—there is no applicant for these orders. Where applicable, data on the type of applicant are given in the following table.

The number of ASBOs issued within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, at all courts, by period and applicant, 1 January 2001 to 30 September 2003 (latest available)

	Applications by				
Period/local authority area.	*Unknown*	*Police*	*Local authority*	*County courts*	*Total*
1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001	2	—	4	n/a	6
1 January 2002 to 30 November 2002[2]	—	—	8	n/a	8
1 December 2002 to 30 September 2003	1	—	16	17	17
Total	3	—	28	31	31

	Issued where the applicant was			
Period/local authority area.	*Police*	*Local authority*	*County courts*	*Total*
1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001	—	4	n/a	4
1 January 2002 to 30 November 2002[1]	—	8	n/a	8
1 December 2002 to 30 September 2003	—	16	—	16
Total	—	28	—	28

n/a = Not applicable.
[1] Following implementation of the Police Reform Act (2002) data for December 2002 are included in the first quarter 2003.
Note:
Petty Sessional Area known only.

Asylum Seekers

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to improve the removal system for failed asylum seekers. [159533]

Beverley Hughes: The Government are committed to tackling abuse of our asylum system by detecting and enforcing the removal of those who fail to comply with our immigration laws. Future plans include increasing detention facilities, working with overseas countries to resolve documentation issues, streamlining our appeals process and developing alternative sources of information and intelligence with other Government agencies. We will continue to review our strategy and pursue new initiatives in order to improve the removal process, our aim being to remove a greater proportion of failed asylum seekers in 2003–04 than in 2002–03.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of how many children will go into care each year under the provisions of Clause 7 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc.) Bill. [159534]

Beverley Hughes: There is nothing in the Bill which changes in any way the grounds on which children may be taken into care. The Bill simply provides that families, illegally resident in the UK once their claims have failed, would no longer be entitled to support at the expense of the taxpayer if they refuse to co-operate with efforts to return them home. If, by putting themselves in this position, parents put their children at risk, it would be for the local authority to decide how the interests of their children should be protected under existing child protection legislation. We do not believe, that many, if any, parents would put their children in this position.

Cannabis

Mr Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the objectives of his Department's campaign to advertise the reclassification of cannabis were; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the campaign against its objectives. [161518]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* The Home Office cannabis radio advertising campaign aimed to raise awareness of the reclassification of cannabis and to communicate that cannabis is illegal and will remain illegal after reclassification, and that it is harmful. The primary audience is under 18s.

The advertising is one strand of a wide range of communication activity that includes leaflets, postcards and education packs for schools and professionals.

The campaign is currently being evaluated using a specialist independent research agency who have conducted pre and post tracking research with a national sample of 14—17s.

CCTV (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much public funding has been spent on CCTV security cameras in Crosby since 1997. [160535]

Ms Blears: In 2001–02, the Sefton MBC area was awarded a total of £636,306 to fund the development of four CCTV schemes in the Town Centres of Bootle, Southport and Crosby, and on the major arterial route of South Road (Waterloo/Crosby).

The Crosby Town Centre Surveillance Project received £108,671 to monitor the town centre, especially in relation to alcohol consumption and day time theft as well as addressing the supply and use of illegal drugs, the congregating of young people and the consequences of underage drinking. The South Road Project, on the border of Waterloo and Crosby, received £185,487 for installation of cameras around bus and railway stations to address specific concerns on car crime, as well as assaults and criminal damage around licensed premises and in the Marine Park. Together these schemes attracted £294,158.

These schemes will be further enhanced by the imminent installation of a further CCTV camera on the edge of the shopping area in Crosby receiving £20,000 support from Small Retailers in Deprived Areas funding.

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter to him from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 27 January 2004 with regard to Mr.Guhar Ali Khan. [161805]

Mr. Blunkett: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 15 March 2004.

Crime Reduction Policy

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Written Statement of 10 March 2004, *Official Report,* columns 101–2WS, on crime and disorder reduction partnerships, if he will list the grants each partnership will receive; when they will receive them; and what the process of distribution will be. [161630]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* Individual funding allocations under the Building Safer Communities (BSC) Fund was circulated to Government Offices, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), Drug Action Teams, Local Authority Chief Executives and Chief Officers of Police on 10 March. This followed my Written Ministerial Statement of the same day.

CDRPs will continue to claim their grant moneys on a quarterly basis beginning in the first quarter of 2004–05 (Year 2 of the fund). Payments are made directly into local authority bank accounts following approval of their quarterly grant claims during the financial year. It is then the responsibility of local authorities to ensure further payments are made as required to other agencies and groups in accordance with the CDRPs' agreed plans.

I am placing copies of the full allocations table in the Library.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the contribution of situational crime prevention techniques to recent reductions in crime. [160203]

Ms Blears: It is not possible to quantify the contribution of situational crime prevention to the recent reduction in crime. This is because situational crime prevention encompasses a wide range of initiatives that aim to make crime more difficult, more risky and less rewarding. There is recent evidence on the effectiveness of some forms of situational crime prevention in this country (for example, alley-gating and CCTV). Results from the British Crime Survey also provide evidence that domestic households that own security measures have a lower chance of being a victim of burglary, even when factors that might be related to both risk and security are taken into account. Recent sweeps of the British Crime Survey have shown that household ownership of a range of security measures is increasing. It is therefore reasonable to think that this may have contributed to the reduction in property crimes over recent years.

Burglary

A major evaluation of some 300 of the local burglary reduction schemes in Phase I of the Safer Cities Programme (1988–95) showed typically a 10–30 per cent. reduction in burglary. It was estimated (with results scaled up to the entire programme) that these, mainly situational, measures prevented some 56,000 burglaries, whose cost to victims and the state would have been £62 million, for expenditure of under £7 million. An evaluation in West Yorkshire of housing incorporating Secured By Design standards (a national police-led certification scheme) showed a crime rate that was 56 per cent. lower, and there is evidence that as well as being effective, this approach is now becoming cost-effective.

One of the most extensive and recent uses of situational crime prevention techniques has been under the Home Office's Reducing Burglary Initiative. Such techniques were employed in the majority of the 247 projects funded between 1999 and 2002. 63 of these projects were subject to a full independent evaluation under Phase I of the initiative. The interim report on these evaluations (Home Office Findings 204, 'Reducing Burglary Initiative, early findings on burglary reduction', published in 2003) reported that

situational crime prevention techniques—when planned, targeted, and implemented successfully—were an effective crime reduction measure. The report highlighted that in the 55 evaluated projects where figures were available, domestic burglary fell by 20 per cent. compared with a pre-project period. This represented a net reduction of 7 per cent. when taking into account the downward trend in burglary found in selected comparison areas.

Four illustrative case studies drawn from the evaluations were published as appendices to the interim report. In all four of these case studies situational crime prevention techniques were considered to have contributed to the observed crime reduction impact. Net burglary reduction in these projects ranged from -12 per cent. to -47 per cent.

However, the interim findings also highlighted the fact that burglary reduction projects were often most effective when they were based—not just on a single approach (such as situational crime prevention)—but on a package of coherent and complementary approaches, including short and long-term measures.

Vehicle crime

Home Office Research Study 266, 'An evaluation of the secured car park award scheme', was also published in 2003, this being an evaluation of a scheme established by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in September 1992. It was designed to encourage car park operators to improve security as a means of reducing criminal activity and the fear of crime in car parks and vehicle retention areas. Results showed that there is evidence that the scheme can help reduce the level of vehicle crime and fear of crime in car parks, when targeted at high crime car parks. The key measures that impact both on crime levels and fear of crime appear to be formal surveillance (including patrols), lighting, access control and the physical appearance of the car park.

Security improvements by manufacturers of new cars are also thought to have been a key factor in reduced levels of car thefts, with compulsory fitting of electronic immobilisers since October 1998, together with other design improvements such as central-locking.

CCTV

A systematic review of the impact of CCTV (Home Office Research Study 252, 'Crime prevention effects of closed circuit television: a systematic review') was published in 2002. This indicated that CCTV was associated with a 41 per cent. reduction in crime in car parks, but provided little evidence of an effect in other settings. Other evaluations show CCTV is most effective when used as part of a wider local crime reduction strategy.

A Home Office funded National Evaluation of CCTV is on-going. Initial findings on implementation from this evaluation were published in 2003 in Home Office Development and Practice Report 7 'National Evaluation of CCTV: early findings on scheme implementation—effective practice guide'. Results relating to the impact of CCTV on crime are not yet available from this evaluation but are expected towards the end of 2004.

Robbery

The Street Crime Initiative was launched in April 2002 to address rises in street crime in 2001–02. It covers the 10 police force areas which together account for the great majority of street crime. Intelligence-led policing in hotspots in the 10 police force areas contributed to a 17 per cent. reduction in robbery in those 10 areas in 2002–03, which means 17,000 fewer offences in those areas.

A pilot scheme is being run by Greater Manchester Police to address crime at automated teller machines (ATMs), by creating defensible spaces around ATMs, to demarcate the area of personal space of the person using the ATM. This makes the potential victim of street crime more spatially aware, and increases the risk to the offender by alerting the ATM user to invasion of defensible space by the offender. Initial findings from the pilot indicate that robbery and theft from the person has fallen at the sites where the scheme is being piloted. There was a 34 per cent. reduction in robbery and theft from the person across the 21 sites in Manchester where the defensible space pilot is running, comparing the six months from 21 December 2002 to 30 June 2003 with the same period in the previous year.

Criminal Records Bureau

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what compensation is given to schools that incur costs to cover classes while new teachers were awaiting Criminal Records Bureau clearance. [155610]

Ms Blears: The Criminal Records Bureau has paid no compensation to schools that incurred such costs.

Disorder Penalty Notices

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to extend the penalty notice for disorder pilot to all forces. [160063]

Ms Blears: My right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary, announced on 14 May 2003 that roll out of the penalty notice for disorder scheme was to be brought forward in view of the positive early results from the pilots. The scheme will be in place in all police forces in England and Wales by 1 April this year.

DNA

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which companies act as suppliers of DNA profiles to the National DNA Database. [160550]

Ms Blears: There are five organisations which are approved suppliers of DNA profiles to The National DNA Database, they are:

Forensic Science Service;

LGC;

Cellmark;

Tayside Police Forensic Science Laboratory;

Strathclyde Police Forensic Science Laboratory.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how intellectual property rights relating to DNA sequences in samples stored by suppliers to the National DNA Database are assigned; and if he will make a statement. [160551]

Ms Blears: There are no intellectual property rights relating to DNA sequences in samples kept in storage by suppliers to The National DNA Database. Intellectual property rights are associated with the techniques used to process the samples when generating DNA profiles. The samples retained in storage are the property of the individual police forces that submit them to the laboratories.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many research projects have been *(a)* approved and *(b)* refused by the National DNA Database Board since 1995. [160552]

Ms Blears: Since 1995, five research proposals have been submitted to the National DNA Database Board for consideration. Of these two were approved, two rejected and one is pending a decision.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many research projects involving *(a)* behavioural genetics and *(b)* ethnic or racial profiling have been approved by the National DNA Database Board since 1995. [160553]

Ms Blears: No research projects involving behavioural genetics have been approved by the National DNA Database Board (NDNAD). Two projects relating to identification of individuals on ethnic or familial basis have been approved by the NDNAD Board.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many research projects using the National DNA Database *(a)* records and *(b)* samples have sought the informed consent of participants since 1995. [161154]

Ms Blears: Neither of the research projects approved by the National DNA Database Board using database records, or the DNA samples collected for the database, have sought the informed consent of participants.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what suppliers of profiles to the National DNA Database have undertaken research projects using *(a)* the database and *(b)* DNA samples collected for the database since 1995. [161155]

Ms Blears: Only the Forensic Science Service have undertaken research projects using either the database or the DNA samples collected for it.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many patent applications have been *(a)* made and *(b)* granted relating to research projects approved by the National DNA Database Board since 1995. [161156]

Ms Blears: To date there have been no patent applications made relating to research projects approved by the National DNA Database Board.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide summaries of all the research projects approved by the National DNA Database Board since 1995. [161157]

Ms Blears: Arrangements will be made for summaries of the research projects that have been approved by the National DNA Database Board to be placed in the House of Commons Library once they have been completed and the reports signed-off.

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the merits of compiling a national DNA database including records for *(a)* all those convicted of an offence, *(b)* all those charged with an offence, *(c)* all those entering the UK for the purposes of employment or residence, *(d)* all those entering the UK for any purpose and *(e)* all newborn babies. [161224]

Ms Blears: The National DNA database currently holds profiles of all those charged with, informed they will be reported for or convicted of a recordable offence. From 5 April this year, when new provisions in the Criminal Justice Act 2003 come into force, the database will also hold DNA profiles from persons arrested for a recordable offence.

There are no plans at present to extend the database further.

Drugs

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many hits have been recorded on the www.talktofrank.com website. [160064]

Caroline Flint: From its inception on the 23 May 2003 to the 23 January 2004, the FRANK website talktofrank.com has received 1,485,111 visits.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* calls and *(b)* e-mails have been received by the Talk to Frank team; and how many (i) calls and (ii) e-mails have been sent by the Talk to Frank team to members of the public. [160065]

Caroline Flint: Since the launch of the Frank drug awareness campaign on the 23 May 2003, to the end of January 2004, the Frank helpline has taken 223,310 calls. The Frank website talktofrank.com, has also received and responded to 18,934 emails. The Frank telephone advisors do not initiate calls to the public.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what public funds were spent on tackling drugs misuse in Crosby in *(a)* 1997–98 and *(b)* 2003–04. [160536]

Caroline Flint: The information is as follows:

Sefton drugs allocation—1997–98	£
Local Health Authority Block contracts	728,671
JMU Database	20,000
Pharmacy costs	100,000
Social Work team	100,000
Drug Misuse special allocation from DoH	374,000

In 2003–04 the total drugs allocation was £3,017,763. This figure includes new funding streams as part of the National Drug Strategy (please see following table), the two years are therefore not directly comparable. Breakdown of financial allocation to local constituencies is not available in the form requested as funding is allocated to Drug Action Team areas (Sefton).

£

National Drug Strategy	2003–04
Partnership Capacity	71,500
Treatment Pooled Budget	1,336,000
Through Care After Care Pump Priming	35,000
Building Safer Communities[1]	484,700

[1] Contains non drug elements

DrugScope

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much grant was given to DrugScope in 2003–04; and what evaluation has been made of its work. [161182]

Caroline Flint: Central Government Departments have committed a total of £988,000 to DrugScope in 2003–04. This includes grants totalling £754,000 and contracts let by the Home Office, Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills and Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Figures are based upon Departmental accounting systems and do not include all payments for consultancy work.

All grants and contracts are subject to terms and conditions that specify required deliverables and management arrangements to ensure these are delivered. The DrugScope Programme Liaison Group meets quarterly to review progress on all Government funded activity and to quality assure work. The Group comprises representatives of funding Departments and DrugScope.

Forensic Science Service

Colin Burgon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what occasions Serco personnel have been invited to the Forensic Science Service establishments in the last year; and for what purpose. [161231]

Ms Blears: SERCO consultants spent approximately 10 days at the Forensic Science Services (FSS) offices at Trident Court, Birmingham. They were providing advice about plans for a new commercial department to improve FSS responses to police tenders. Visits were made to the FSS premises in London for the same purpose.

In addition, as part of a programme of staff briefings, the HR Director of the National Physical Laboratory, a Government owned contractor operated by Serco, visited the FSS laboratories to provide staff with a view of the transition from public to private sector, with particular regard to arrangements for pensions and terms and conditions of service including pensions.

Huntingdon Life Sciences

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what severity limits were allocated to *(a)* Study DKN 112/033062 and *(b)* Study DKN 137/033686 conducted at Huntingdon Life Sciences; what his Department's assessment was of the potential benefits of these studies; and how his Department arrived at this assessment. [159794]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* The severity limits assigned to the protocols relating to these studies, as set out in Guidance on the Operation of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (HC321), were respectively "moderate" and "substantial". The potential benefit in both cases was determination of the toxicity of certain compounds and risks they might pose to man and the environment. Decisions on whether and on what terms to license such studies are informed by professional assessments made by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate in accordance with relevant parts of section five of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. The aim has been to ensure that animal use only occurs when justified, and that in those circumstances animal suffering in such studies is minimised, consistent with satisfactorily achieving the scientific purpose.

Identity Cards

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether personal data stored on a national identity database will be exported or made available abroad. [157300]

Beverley Hughes: As set out in "Identity Cards: The Next Steps" (Cm 6020), disclosure of information held on the National Identity Register would only be authorised in specific circumstances. Such disclosure would be subject to legal and procedural safeguards and independent oversight. There are no plans to authorise disclosure of information from the National Identity Register to overseas organisations.

Impairment Tests

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the impairment tests which do not require the use of equipment will be introduced; and when the code of practice will be published. [161187]

Caroline Flint: We expect impairment tests which do not require the use of equipment to detect drivers who are under the influence of drugs to be introduced later this year. A Code of Practice is currently under preparation and will be published prior to the introduction of the tests.

International Rights Covenant

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what cross-departmental discussions involving his Department have taken place regarding the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights. [161479]

Fiona Mactaggart: I am not aware of any cross-Whitehall discussions about the Covenant involving Home Office Ministers or officials. My Officials, along with officials in other Government Departments whose responsibilities are covered by the Covenant, contributed to the UK's last report to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the implementation of the UK's obligations under the Covenant in January 2001. Following the UN Committee's recommendations in 2002, my officials contributed, in Spring 2003, to the Government's submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' inquiry into how the Government are

taking forward the UN Committee's recommendations. The Home Office's primary responsibility covered by the Covenant concerns racial discrimination.

National Dog Register

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will reinstate a national dog register. [161695]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* There are no plans to do so.

Online Crime Reporting

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many minor crimes have been reported online in each year since the service became available. [158042]

Ms Blears: The Police Information Technology Organisation, which hosts the minor crimes online reporting facility through www.police.uk, informs me that the service became available in May 2001. There were 2,009 reports completed by the public from then until the end of the 2001 calendar year. There were 13,774 completed reports in 2002, 14,982 in 2003 and 2,318 in the first two months of this year.

Police

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many accidents involving police vehicles took place in each London borough in 2003. [160209]

Caroline Flint: Information on the number of police vehicle accidents broken down by individual London boroughs is not collected centrally.

The Metropolitan Police Service does, however, record collisions involving police vehicles and the table attached has been provided by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis.

Phil Sawford: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were in England and Wales in *(a)* May 1993 and *(b)* May 1997. [161677]

Ms Blears: On 30 May 1993 there were 127,969 police officers in England and Wales. Between April 1995 and March 2002 police strength was collected only twice a year (March and September). In March 1997 police strength had decreased to 127,158.

There were 49,554 police (support) staff in May 1993. This had increased to 53,011 by March 1997.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on the reasons for requiring the returns of police officer numbers from constabularies for the purpose of his recent announcement on a different basis to the normal quarterly and annual return provided to his office by constabularies; [161824]

(2) how many police officers there are per force on the basis of the normal quarterly and annual returns provided by constabularies to his Department. [161825]

Ms Blears: The Home Office's Research, Development and Statistics Directorate collects, analyses and publishes a full and detailed breakdown of numbers of police officers and other police staff.

However given the substantial investment that this Government has made to increase police officer numbers, Ministers have, from time to time sought separate reports on progress being made on the delivery of our aim to increase strength and police visibility through the Crime Fighting Fund.

Reports were sought for January 2001, January 2002 and August 2003 and for December 2003. These reports are based on information which forces have readily to hand on how many police officers they currently employ and should not create a significant additional burden for forces.

The following table provides information on police officers strength on 30 September 2003, which was published on 2 March 2004.

Police Officer strength as at 30 September 2003

	Actual police office strength	[1]*All officers*
Avon and Somerset	3,328	3,273
Bedfordshire	1,164	1,147
Cambridgeshire	1,415	1,406
Cheshire	2,189	2,152
Cleveland	1,616	1,603
Cumbria	1,193	1,171
Derbyshire	2,061	2,049
Devon and Cornwall	3,286	3,259
Dorset	1,423	1,401
Durham	1,684	1,668
Essex	3,074	3,055
Gloucestershire	1,258	1,245
Greater Manchester	7,724	7,653
Hampshire	3,763	3,704
Hertfordshire	2,080	2,057
Humberside	2,188	2,170
Kent	3,539	3,538
Lancashire	3,512	3,475
Leicestershire	2,211	2,180
Lincolnshire	1,231	1,214
London, City of	815	813
Merseyside	4,149	4,129
Metropolitan Police	29,257	28,951
Norfolk	1,520	1,513
North Yorkshire	1,481	1,471
Northamptonshire	1,258	1,236
Northumbria	4,039	4,016
Nottinghamshire	2,455	2,438
South Yorkshire	3,222	3,193
Staffordshire	2,260	2,243
Suffolk	1,306	1,299
Surrey	1,977	1,960
Sussex	3,028	2,973
Thames Valley	4,049	3,982
Warwickshire	986	983
West Mercia	2,379	2,367
West Midlands	7,960	7,913
West Yorkshire	5,230	5,202
Wiltshire	1,242	1,236
Dyfed Powys	1,158	1,155
Gwent	1,347	1,340
North Wales	1,597	1,593
South Wales	3,286	3,256

Police Officer strength as at 30 September 2003

	Actual police office strength	[1] *All officers*
Total 43 forces	135,938	134,683
NCS	1,179	1,179
NCIS	262	262
Other secondments	673	673
Total	138,052	136,797

[1] Less staff on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave (comparable with previously published figures)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what his Department estimates would be the necessary increase in funding to Leicestershire Police Authority to rectify the current budget deficit; [155485]

(2) what assessment he has made of the current financial position of the Leicestershire Police Authority; and if he will make a statement; [155486]

(3) what assessment he has made of the funding shortfalls to police authorities in England and Wales. [155488]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 23 February 2004]*: All police authorities in England and Wales will receive a 3.25 per cent. increase in general grants in 2004–05, above the police pay award increase of 3 per cent. and general inflation projections of 2.6 per cent.

The arrangement was made to ensure that all police authorities receive a reasonable increase. In addition, funding is provided for a range of targeted programmes and capital provision.

Leicestershire Police Authority will receive general grant funding of £102.0 million in 2004–05, an increase of £3.2 million. On top of this, it will receive over £10 million for targeted programmes and capital provision.

Leicestershire have set a final budget of £138.1 million for 2004–05, an increase of 6.1 per cent. over this year. The police authority's decision will have taken into account grant allocations.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by how much in *(a)* percentage and *(b)* cash terms Leicestershire Police grant has increased in each year from 1997–98 to 2004–05. [155487]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The information is set out in the table.

	General government grants [1,2] *£ million*	*Increase £ million*	*Percentage*
1997–98	83.9	—	—
1998–99	85.3	1.4	1.6
1999–00	87.9	2.6	3.0
2000–01	90.6	2.7	3.1
2001–02	94.6	4.0	4.4
2001–02[3]	92.2		
2002–03	94.5	2.3	2.5
2003–04	98.8	4.3	4.5
2004–05	102.0	3.2	3.3

[1] General Government Grants comprise Home Office police grant, ODPM Revenue Support Grant and National Non-Domestic Rates.

[2] In addition to general grants, Leicestershire benefited from funding from the Crime Fighting Fund, Rural Policing Fund, Basic Command Unit funding, Community Support Officer funding, Special Priority Payments, Airwave, the DNA Expansion Programme, capital grant (excluding Supplementary Credit Approvals) and the Premises Improvement Fund. £0.9 million in 1997–98, £0.8 million in 1998–99, £1.1 million in 1999–2000, £2.0 million in 2000–01, £8.4 million in 2001–02, £6.3 million in 2002–03, £8.5 million in 2003–04 and an estimated £8.8 million in 2004–05.

[3] Figures for 2001–02 are not directly comparable with 2002–03 due to the change in the funding arrangements of NCS and NCIS. Adjusted figures for 2001–02 are therefore included in the table.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether revenues raised from speed cameras were included in the calculation of the Thames Valley police budget for *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04. [160652]

Caroline Flint: Revenue raised from speed cameras is not taken into account in the setting of Police grant or local budgets.

Fines and fixed penalties for speeding offences, like those for all other criminal offences, are paid to the Treasury. Some fixed penalty income from speed limit enforcement by camera can be netted off, but its use is very strictly ring-fenced for the purposes of meeting expenditure incurred in the prevention or detection of speeding, or red light, offences or in the enforcement of or proceedings in respect of such offences. The netting-off provides for cost-recovery only and furnishes no income for other purposes.

Safe Third Countries

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers he will bring forward to remove a country from the list of safe third countries. [159531]

Beverley Hughes: Schedule 3 to the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Bill takes a differentiated approach toward human rights challenges against removal to safe third countries by providing for three lists. Part 6 of the Schedule provides for the removal of a State from lists at Parts 3 and 4 by Order subject to annulment by resolution of either House of Parliament. The Government does not consider it necessary to provide a similar Order—making power in relation to removal of a State from the list at Part 2. We intend that this list should be limited to European Union Member States which are party to the "Dublin" arrangements for determining the State responsible for examining an asylum application and other states such as Norway and Iceland, which are associated with those arrangements.

School Buses (Sex Offenders)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) in what circumstances a convicted sex offender would be able to drive a school bus without having a Criminal Records Bureau check performed on them; [159199]

(2) whether a person employed by a local authority to drive a school bus would be required to have a Criminal Records Bureau check before taking up the job. [159200]

Ms Blears: Part 5 of the Police Act 1997, under which the Criminal Records Bureau has been established, imposes no requirement for checks to be carried out, but sets out eligibility for a Disclosure. Eligibility criteria for a Standard Disclosure include all persons whose duties include caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children. Those whose duties regularly involve such elements are eligible for an Enhanced Disclosure. In some instances, checks have been made mandatory under other legislation. Where Checks are not mandatory, it is open to the employer to require that checks are carried out. Consideration is being given to the issue of guidance by the Department for Education and Skills as regards school transport arrangements. The activities, including employment, of a convicted sex offender who is on the sex offenders register would be monitored by the police who, if a risk is identified, would take appropriate action.

Suspended Prison Officers

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was of the case brought against the prison officers Mr. Rowland, Mr. Kerry and Mr. Watkins by the Prison Service. [150818]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* I understand from the Chief Constable of Kent Constabulary that estimated costs to the force to investigate this case were under £10,000.

Tetra

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimates he has made of the cost of introducing the Tetra telecommunication system for the Police Authority in Wales in each year from 2003–04 to 2005–06; and what proportion of this funding has been made available by the Home Office. [161297]

Ms Blears: The Home Office has provided £4.7 million in 2003–04 to police forces in Wales and will provide £5.5 million in 2004–05. This fully meets the costs of the nationally agreed core Airwave service in Wales and provides additional funding for capital expenditure and optional features required by individual forces. Estimated costs of the core service in Wales for 2005–06 are £6.7 million. The Home Office contribution in 2005–06 has not yet been finalised.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what Government resources have been expended on the 02 Airwave Tetra project, including preparatory work. [161419]

Ms Blears: The total expenditure on the Airwave police radio system from 2000–01 to 2003–04 is £394.5 million. This includes 02 service costs of £117.2 million and setting-up costs of £277.3 million.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budgetary provision has been made for further expenditure by the United Kingdom Government on the O2 Airwave Tetra project. [161420]

Ms Blears: The Spending Reviews SR2000 and SR2002 provided baseline funding for the Airwave service. SR2004 includes provision for the Home Office to continue funding the nationally agreed core Airwave service for police forces in England and Wales. Government will contribute to Airwave core costs in Scotland under the Barnett formula as prescribed by Her Majesty's Treasury. The Home Office is also providing £10 million to forces in Scotland to support the introduction of Airwave in 2004–05.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what account was taken of the precautionary principle in the setting of the United Kingdom safety limit on Tetra. [161421]

Ms Blears: The National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) has statutory responsibility for setting safety limits on exposure to electromagnetic field radiation in the UK. The recent NRPB consultation document included sections on the application of the precautionary principle to the determination of guidelines for exposure to electromagnetic radiation from 0 to 300 GHz. No specific mention of Tetra is made in those sections.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has been involved in discussions with third countries about Tetra. [161422]

Ms Blears: Tetra is a European standard developed by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute. Home Office technical experts have participated as UK representatives in the development of the Tetra standard.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which emergency services for which his Department is responsible do not use the Tetra system. [161423]

Ms Blears: The Home Office is responsible for the police service in England and Wales. All police forces in England and Wales will use the new Tetra radio system.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what account was taken of the non-thermal effects of Tetra radiation, such as low-frequency pulsing, by his Department prior to the setting of the United Kingdom safety limit on Tetra radiation. [161424]

Ms Blears: The National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) is responsible for setting safety limits for radiation hazards in the UK. In 2001, The Home Office asked the Board of NRPB to provide advice on any health implications of Tetra technology. The Board of NRPB subsequently asked its independent Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation (Agnir) to examine the issue.

The Agnir report on "Possible health effects from Tetra" was published in June 2001. The report concluded that "although areas of uncertainty remain about the biological effects of low level radiofrequency electromagnetic fields in general, including modulated signals, current evidence suggests that it is unlikely that the special features of the signals from Tetra mobile terminals pose a hazard to health". Agnir also noted that the signals from Tetra base stations are not pulsed whereas those from mobile terminals and repeaters are. Hence there is no reason to believe that exposure to the signals from Tetra base stations should be treated any differently to the exposure to signals from other base

stations. The Agnir report on Tetra has been considered by NRPB in the current review of its advice on safety limits for exposure to electromagnetic fields with frequencies from 0 to 300 GHz.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who he consulted prior to the setting of the UK's safety limit on Tetra radiation. [161429]

Ms Blears: In the UK, the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) is responsible for setting safety limits on exposure to electromagnetic fields. Safety limits are not technology-specific.

The NRPB has recently carried out a comprehensive review of exposure guidelines and a consultation document was published in May 2003. Comments were received from a range of stakeholders, including government departments. The comments have been used in the preparation of updated advice to government, which NRPB expects to publish around the end of March 2004.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department received adverse comment on the proposed UK safety limit on Tetra radiation. [161430]

Ms Blears: The Airwave Tetra radio system used by the police fully complies with the safety limits set by the National Radiological Protection Board. We have received no adverse comments on the UK safety limits set by the National Radiological Protection Board.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he received from the Scottish Executive prior to the setting of the UK safety limit on Tetra radiation. [161431]

Ms Blears: The Home Office has had no representations from the Scottish Executive on this issue, which is a matter for the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB). The NRPB is currently reviewing its advice to Government on non-ionising radiation at frequencies from 0 to 300 GHz, which includes Tetra radiation. The Scottish Executive had the opportunity to respond to the NRPB public consultation document issued in May 2003.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will commission an urgent review of the health implications of Tetra radiation. [161432]

Ms Blears: In 2001, the Home Office asked the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) for advice on the health aspects of Tetra technology. The NRPB's independent Advisory Board on Non-ionising Radiation (Agnir) published its report on "Possible health effects from Tetra" in June 2001. The conclusions of the Agnir experts were upheld in their recently published follow-up to the Stewart report, "Health effects from radiofrequency electromagnetic fields". In particular they confirm that "there is no reason to believe that signals from Tetra base stations should be treated differently to those from other base stations". There are no plans to commission any further reviews.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research commissioned by the Government is being carried out concerning Tetra radiation. [161433]

Ms Blears: On the recommendation of independent experts, the Home Office set up a comprehensive programme of work on Tetra health issues. The Home Office also funds Tetra-related research as an adjunct to the Mobile Telecommunications Research Programme co-ordinated by the Department of Health. No adverse effects of Tetra have been found. Biological studies carried out by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory have shown that Tetra has no effect on calcium exchanges in cells—the main concern raised about this type of technology. Longer-term human volunteer studies are under way. Further information is available on the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/tetra.html.

Travel Documents

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures are in place to ensure that passengers with inadequate documents are intercepted on their arrival in the UK. [159528]

Beverley Hughes: Measures to intercept passengers with inadequate documents on their arrival in the UK include risk-assessing all incoming flights, conducting intelligence-led document checks, observing passengers as they disembark from aircraft and ad hoc special exercises sometimes involving other agencies and at certain locations using CCTV.

At the main arrivals control, passengers are interviewed and their documents examined to detect impostors and to identify forged or counterfeit passports or passengers without the requisite entry clearance.

In addition we have strategies in place to prevent passengers with inadequate documents arriving in the UK. These include the use of pre-entry controls in France (Juxtaposed controls), new detection technology screening equipment to detect clandestine entrants and Airline Liaison Officers (ALOs) who offer advice to airlines on the validity of travel documents held by passengers.

The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc) Bill, currently before Parliament, includes proposals to make disposing of travel documents without reasonable excuse a criminal offence.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the evaluation of the Netherlands' powers to require carriers to copy travel documents; and how this has influenced the Department's proposals. [159530]

Beverley Hughes: Officials have been in contact with colleagues in The Netherlands and will continue to liaise with them as necessary. The system in The Netherlands works differently from the system the Government are proposing; a separate evaluation would, therefore, be of limited value at present. We will, however, consider the

comparative effectiveness of the system in The Netherlands as part of the evaluation process of the Home Office trial.

United States (Visa Vetting)

Mr. Luke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what facilities are granted to the US Department of Homeland Security to share information on criminal convictions required for the vetting of UK citizens on their entry to the US under the visa waiver scheme. [154037]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 10 February 2006]:* The US Government has not asked to routinely share criminal record information. A request for such information on an individual basis may be considered by the police.

DEFENCE

Continuous Attitudes Survey

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many times per annum the questions and response options included in the Continuous Attitudes Survey for the *(a)* Royal Navy, *(b)* Army and *(c)* RAF are reviewed; how often they have been changed in the last three years; and if he will list the changes made per annum; [160121]

(2) when the questions and response options included in the Continuous Attitudes Survey for the *(a)* Royal Navy, *(b)* Army and *(c)* RAF were last changed; what these changes were; and if he will make a statement. [160122]

Mr. Caplin: A major review of the Royal Navy Continuous Attitude Survey (CAS) is conducted once a year. Changes are made between each survey as is felt necessary. In the Army a full review of CAS is undertaken once a year, while in the RAF, questions and response options are in effect under continuous review, with questions being added, deleted or amended as required in support of policy initiatives.

I will write to the hon. Gentleman with further details and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Defence Agencies

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the *(a)* expenditure and *(b)* number of staff employed for each defence agency and organisation in (i) Wales and (ii) England in each year since 1997. [158898]

Mr. Caplin: Figures relating to civilian personnel employed in Ministry of Defence agencies and Trading Funds are detailed in the following tables 1 and 2 together with appropriate footnotes. Service personnel figures and information relating to manning costs of agencies and Trading Funds is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Civilian staff strengths[1,2,3]

Table 1—civilian personnel—England

	1 April 1997	*1 April 1998*	*1 April 1999*	*1 April 2000*	*1 April 2001*	*1 April 2002*	*1 April 2003*	*1 April 2004*
Ministry of Defence (less agencies and Trading Funds)	37,030	34,160	36,600	29,550	28,060	28,710	32,550	31,910
Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency[4]	840	110	100	120	110	120	150	140
Army Base Repair Organisation[5]	2,750	2,540	2,360	2,360	2,450	1,920	1,830	1,730
Army Base Storage and Distribution Agency[6]	3,640	3,320	—	—	—	—	—	—
Army Personnel Centre[7]	580	20	10	40	50	70	100	110
Army Technical Support Authority[8]	800	810	760	—	—	—	—	—
Army Training and Recruitment Agency[9]	—	4,220	3,980	4,030	4,010	3,970	4,000	4,000
British Forces Post Office[10]	310	310	310	330	320	320	340	330
Defence Analytical Services Agency[11]	120	120	100	120	130	140	140	150
Defence Animal Centre[12]	60	60	—	—	—	—	—	—
Defence Aviation Repair Agency[13]	—	—	1,080	1,110	1,030	1,020	980	900
Defence Bills Agency[14]	650	670	630	600	580	580	590	580
Defence Clothing and Textile Agency[15]	460	380	310	—	—	—	—	—
Defence Codification Agency[16]	10	10	—	—	—	—	—	—
Defence Communications Service Agency[17]	—	470	570	1,310	2,730	2,780	2,930	2,790
Defence Dental Agency[18]	110	140	150	170	[56]—	160	160	170
Defence Estates[19]	1,020	980	1,060	1,050	1,170	1,180	1,290	1,210
Defence Evaluation and Research Agency[20]	9,240	9,920	9,700	10,160	10,130	—	—	—
Defence Geographic Imagery Intelligence Agency[21]	—	—	—	840	750	690	760	790
Defence Housing Executive[22]	—	—	850	810	830	810	650	630
Defence Intelligence and Security Centre[23]	90	120	130	140	130	140	140	140
Defence Medical Education and Training Agency[24]	—	—	—	—	—	—	620	590
Defence Medical and Training Organisation[25]	—	100	160	160	170	170	190	590
Defence Procurement Agency[26]	—	—	—	3,650	3,440	3,510	3,440	3,550
Defence Science and Technology Laboratory[27]	—	—	—	—	—	2,590	2,740	2,890
Defence Secondary Care Agency[28]	—	680	750	690	680	570	—	—
Defence Storage and Distribution Agency[29]	—	—	—	2,670	2,480	2,220	3,150	3,120
Defence Transport and Movements Agency[30]	140	150	170	200	310	310	290	280
Defence Vetting Agency[31]	50	320	320	350	330	250	270	310
Disposal Services Agency[32]	30	20	20	20	20	20	70	—

Civilian staff strengths[1,2,3]
Table 1—civilian personnel—England

	1 April 1997	*1 April 1998*	*1 April 1999*	*1 April 2000*	*1 April 2001*	*1 April 2002*	*1 April 2003*	*1 April 2004*
Duke of Yorks Royal Military School[33]	100	100	100	100	100	110	100	100
Joint Air Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre[34]	140	150	140	—	—	—	—	—
Logistic Information Systems Agency[35]	160	180	200	—	—	—	—	—
Logistics Support Services[36]	440	370	400	—	—	—	—	—
Medical Supply Agency[37]	217	231	242	246	[56]—	[56]—	260	[56]—
Meteorological Office[38]	1,770	1,820	1,680	1,890	1,840	1,850	1,840	1,610
Military Survey[39]	700	680	680	—	—	—	—	—
Ministry of Defence Police[40]	2,720	2,670	2,600	2,560	2,440	2,410	2,420	2,530
Naval Aircraft Repair Organisation[41]	1,160	1,150	—	—	—	—	—	—
Naval Bases and Supplies Agency[42]	5,450	4,310	4,450	—	—	—	—	—
Naval Manning Agency[43]	80	100	90	100	110	110	110	110
Naval Recruiting and Training Agency[44]	1,550	1,470	1,120	1,100	1,000	940	970	1,000
Pay and Personnel Agency[45]	890	840	670	620	640	660	690	720
RAF Maintenance Group Defence Agency[46]	1,320	1,070	—	—	—	—	—	—
RAF Personnel Management Agency[47]	210	220	230	220	240	240	210	210
RAF Signals Engineering Establishment[48]	520	510	520	—	—	—	—	—
RAF Training Group Defence Agency[49]	1,830	1,920	1,860	1,890	1,850	1,860	1,810	1,910
Service Childrens Education[50]	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Specialist Procurement Services[51]	—	730	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ships Support Agency[52]	2,150	2,110	2,140	6,760	—	—	—	—
UK Hydrographic Office[53]	760	770	790	820	830	870	890	880
Veterans Agency[54]	—	—	—	—	—	790	720	700
Warship Support Agency[55]	—	—	—	—	5,450	4,960	3,550	3,520

Civilian staff strengths[1,2,3]
Table 2—civilian personnel—Wales

	1 April 1997	*1 April 1998*	*1 April 1999*	*1 April 2000*	*1 April 2001*	*1 April 2002*	*1 April 2003*	*1 April 2004*
Ministry of Defence (less agencies and Trading Funds)	860	850	790	680	710	690	790	750
Army Base Repair Organisation[5]	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	10
Army Base Storage and Distribution Agency[6]	20	20	—	—	—	—	—	—
Army Personnel Centre[7]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Army Technical Support Authority[8]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Army Training and Recruitment Agency[9]	—	130	140	150	170	160	140	140
British Forces Post Office[10]	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Defence Aviation Repair Agency[13]	—	—	3,450	3,290	3,020	3,010	2,770	2,480
Defence Communications Service Agency[17]	—	—	—	—	100	80	—	—
Defence Dental Agency[18]	[56]—	[56]—	[56]—	[56]—	[56]—	[56]—	[56]—	[56]—
Defence Estates[19]	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	10
Defence Evaluation and Research Agency[20]	280	370	300	330	310	—	—	—
Defence Housing Executive[22]	—	—	10	10	10	10	10	10
Defence Procurement Agency[26]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
Defence Science and Technology Laboratory[27]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Defence Storage and Distribution Agency[29]	—	—	—	190	180	180	190	230
Logistics Support Services[36]	—	—	10	—	—	—	—	—
Meteorological Office[38]	40	40	40	30	30	30	40	40
Ministry of Defence Police[40]	60	30	30	20	20	20	—	—
Naval Aircraft Repair Organisation[41]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Naval Bases and Supplies Agency[42]	40	40	50	—	—	—	—	—
Naval Recruiting and Training Agency[44]	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Pay and Personnel Agency[45]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
RAF Maintenance Group Defence Agency[46]	3,130	3,300	—	—	—	—	—	—
RAF Training Group Defence Agency[49]	260	190	180	130	130	130	140	150
Ships Support Agency[52]	10	30	30	80	—	—	—	—
Veterans Agency[54]	—	—	—	—	—	10	10	10
Warship Support Agency[55]	—	—	—	—	50	50	40	50

[1] Figures refer to permanent staff only, casual staff or those not paid by MOD (eg career break) not included.
[2] Figures include values for part time staff proportionate to those of full time staff.
[3] All figures are rounded to the nearest 10, as a result totals may not always equal the sum of the parts.
[4] Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency was formed in April 1997.
[5] The Army Base Repair Organisation was formed in April 1993 and gained Trading Fund status on 1 April 2002, subsequently renamed ABRO.
[6] Army Base Storage And Distribution Agency was setup in April 1995 and absorbed into DSDA from April 1999.
[7] Army Personnel Centre was formed in December 1996.
[8] Army Technical Support Authority was formed October 1995 and absorbed into DLO March 2000.
[9] Army Training and Recruitment Agency was formed in July 1997 by absorbing AITO plus recruiting.
[10] Known as the Defence Postal and Courier Services Agency until 1 July 1999.

[11] Defence Analytical Services Agency formed July 1992.
[12] The Defence Animal Centre was formed in June 1993 and the agency was absorbed into the Army Training and Recruitment Agency in April 1999.
[13] The Defence Aviation Repair Agency was formed in April 1999 and gained Trading Fund status on 1 April 2001.
[14] Defence Bills Agency was formed in December 1996.
[15] Defence Clothing And Textile Agency was created in November 1994 and absorbed into DLO October 2000.
[16] Defence Codification Agency was formed in June 1996 and absorbed into LSS April 1999.
[17] Defence Communications Service Agency formed April 1998 and absorbed elements of DGIC, CHOTS, RAF Comms, RAFSEE and LISA.
[18] Defence Dental Agency was formed February 1996. A breakdown by country is not available, therefore, the figures provided are a UK total.
[19] Known as the Defence Estates Organisation until 1 March 1999.
[20] Defence Evaluation and Research Agency—public-private partnership took place in July 2001. DSTL, a trading fund, was established to take on the retained science and technology services.
[21] Defence Geographic Imagery Intelligence Agency formed April 2000 and included JARIC and Mil Survey.
[22] Defence Housing Executive was formed April 1999.
[23] Defence Intelligence And Security Centre was formed October 1996.
[24] Agency was launched on 1 April 2003, subsumed responsibilities of the Defence Medical Training Organisation and Defence Secondary Care Agency.
[25] Defence Medical and Training Organisation formed in April 1997 and was absorbed into the Defence Medical Education and Training Agency in April 2003.
[26] Launched on 1 April 1999 assuming responsibilities of the Specialist Procurement Services Agency.
[27] Trading Fund, created on 1 July 2001 to take on responsibility for the retained services of the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency post QinetiQ.
[28] Formed in April 1996. On 1 April 2003 the Defence Secondary Care Agency ceased to exist and became part of the Defence Medical Education and Training Agency.
[29] Defence Storage and Distribution Agency formed in April 1999.
[30] Defence Transport And Movements Agency formed April 1999 subsumed DTMX, Air Movements exec and Joint Transport and Movements staff.
[31] Defence Vetting Agency was formed in April 1997.
[32] Known as the Disposal Sales Agency until 1 April 1999.
[33] The Duke of York Military School was set up in April 1992.
[34] Joint Air Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre was formed in April 1996 and absorbed into DGIA April 2000.
[35] Logistic Information Systems Agency setup in November 1994 and absorbed in to DCSA with parts of DGIS from April 2001.
[36] Logistic Support Services Agency was formed in December 1996 and absorbed into DLO March 2000.
[37] Medical Supplies Agency formed March 1996. A breakdown by country is not available, therefore, the figures provided are a UK total.
[38] The Meteorological Office was formed in April 1990 and the agency gained Trading Fund status on 1 April 1996.
[39] Military Survey Defence Agency was formed in April 1991 and was absorbed into the DGIIA in April 2000.
[40] Ministry of Defence Police formed in April 1996.
[41] Naval Aircraft Repair Organisation formed in April 1992 and was absorbed into DARA in April 1999.
[42] Naval Bases and Supplies Agency formed in December 1996 and was absorbed into the Ships Support Agency in April 2000.
[43] Naval Manning Agency was formed July 1996.
[44] Naval Recruiting And Training Agency was setup in April 1995.
[45] Pay And Personnel Agency was formed in February 1996
[46] The RAF Maintenance Group Defence Agency formed in April 1991 and was absorbed into the Defence Aviation Repair Agency on 1 April 1999.
[47] RAF Personnel Management Agency was formed in February 1997.
[48] RAF Signals Engineering Establishment was setup in November 1994 and absorbed in to DCSA April 2000.
[49] RAF Training Group Defence Agency formed in April 1994.
[50] Service Childrens Education formed April 1991.
[51] Specialist Procurement Services was formed in June 1997 and absorbed into the DPA in April 1999.
[52] Ships Support Agency was formed in December 1996 and absorbed the Naval Bases and Supplies Agency in April 2000.
[53] The UK Hydrographic Office was formed in April 1990 and the agency gained Trading Fund status on 1 April 1996.
[54] Veterans Agency, the renamed War Pensions Agency, transferred to MOD from DSS in April 2002.
[55] Warship Support Agency was formed from the merger of Ships Support Agency and Naval Bases and Supply Agency during 2000–01.
[56] Not available.

Note:
'—'denotes zero or rounded to zero.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the *(a)* military bases, *(b)* Ministry of Defence sites and *(c)* docks under consideration for (i) run-down and (ii) closure. [161246]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence keeps the size and location of its bases under constant review. In the estate strategy, "In Trust and On Trust", the Department set out its intention to define its mainland Great Britain sites as 'core' or 'non-core'. Initial classification work was conducted last year. Building on this the Department is now undertaking further work to identify where estate rationalisation may be possible. Any specific proposals arising from these studies will be subjected to full consultation in due course.

Departmental Minutes

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, prior to putting in place the planned increase in public insurance liability to cover the submarine reactor fuel core factory and associated Neptune test reactor as proposed in the departmental minute of 11 March 2004, he will place in the Library a copy of full risk appraisal referred to in the minute. [161971]

Mr. Ingram: As this appraisal relates to sensitive nuclear materials and industrial processes, I am withholding it in accordance with Exemption 1 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (which relates to defence, security and international relations).

Iraq

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 29–30W, on Iraq if he will *(a)* give the date and *(b)* describe each of the events for which compensation was paid to Iraqi civilians for injuries caused by UK forces; and if he will make a statement. [157150]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* 22 individuals have received payment as a result of claims for compensation submitted since 1 May 2003 by Iraqi civilians claiming to have been injured by UK forces.

These claims resulted from the following events:

	Events
5 August 2003	Injuries resulting from property search
6 August 2003	Injuries sustained in road traffic accident
9 August 2003	Gunshot wound
14 August 2003	Injuries sustained in road traffic accident
22 August 2003	Injuries sustained during arrest
30 September 2003	Injuries sustained in road traffic accident
14 October 2003	Gunshot wound

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what meetings ministers and officials in his Department have had with relatives of Iraqi civilians allegedly killed as a result of Coalition action. [158859]

Mr. Ingram: In Iraq, members of the UK armed forces and other MOD officials meet Iraqis to discuss a range of issues, and these can include the topic of civilian casualties. In the event of a claim issued by Iraqi civilians against UK forces, for example, Area Claims Officers will meet those who wish to issue the claim.

As these arrangements are in place in theatre, Ministers and MOD officials in the UK have not had cause to meet civilians specifically to discuss the issue of the alleged killing of their relatives by Coalition action.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many contracts have been awarded to UK firms for the reconstruction of Iraq; and how many of these are *(a)* Welsh firms and *(b)* firms with operations in Wales. [158894]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: In view of the large number of different organisations involved in letting reconstruction contracts in Iraq, it has become difficult to maintain a definitive picture of the total volume of contracts awarded, and the cumulative value of these contracts. In addition a number of British companies have been awarded contracts and sub-contracts for the reconstruction process in Iraq, but some have asked us not to publicise their success because of issues of commercial confidentiality. Those companies that have advised us of their success are not recorded by region, and so we are therefore unable to assess the success or otherwise of companies with operations in Wales. I will write to the hon. Member with further details about some of the Contracts that we know bout.

Merchant Navy

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for the future protection of the Merchant Navy. [161912]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Navy works closely with other Government Departments on the need to protect shipping and employs a worldwide Maritime Trade Operations (MTO) policy, which enables it to offer a number of options to support merchant shipping. They range from provision of routine advice and guidance, through to Naval supervision of merchant vessels. Decisions about the timing and type of support offered are informed by the threat level in a region or area. The global threat to merchant shipping is kept under constant review, and if necessary, additional MTO measures can be implemented quickly. Decisions over future safeguards or levels of protection will always reflect the level of threat that is present.

New Bases

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many new *(a)* Army, *(b)* Royal Navy and *(c)* RAF bases are being considered for opening; and in what areas. [148460]

Mr. Caplin: There are no current plans to acquire land for new Service bases.

Parliamentary Questions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many parliamentary questions have been tabled to his Department since 1st January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157738]

Mr. Caplin: According to our records 4,195 ordinary written parliamentary questions and 819 named day parliamentary questions were tabled to Defence Ministers between 1 January 2003 and 26 February 2004.

Information on the number of days taken to answer is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Defence Ministers aim to answer named day questions on the day named and ordinary written questions within five sitting days.

Reservists

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what actions he has taken to promote the role of reservists arising from their contribution in Iraq; how many reservists have been recruited to the armed forces since the beginning of hostilities in that country; and if he will make a statement. [161348]

Mr. Caplin: The Government's aim is to continue to raise national awareness of the commitment and integration of reservists in the overall force, and to

acknowledge the importance of the support we receive from employers, families and of course the reservists themselves.

We provide, through the Permanent Joint Headquarters Northwood, consideration and support to journalists that apply for access to reservists serving in Iraq. The provisions of the Editors Abroad Scheme assist this task.

Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers (SaBRE) campaign run by the MOD continues to encourage support for the Volunteer Reserve Forces amongst civilian employers. To highlight the profile of reservists, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State held a reception in autumn last year for major UK employers, to thank them for their support for reservists. Similar receptions were also held around the UK for key regional employers. In addition, two parties of journalists were sent to Iraq to specifically highlight the use of reservists with the employer audience at home. I met with a large number of Reservists during my recent visit to South East Iraq.

The number of volunteer reservists (VRs) who have been recruited since 1 March 2003 is not held centrally. Each Service records data separately and in different formats. The information available is given below:

Royal Navy Reserve: 305

Royal Marines Reserve: 180

Royal Auxiliary Air Force: 295

No figures for the Territorial Army are currently available.

Rest and Recuperation

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel serving on operations abroad had their rest and recuperation period reduced as a result of military transport difficulties in each of the past 12 months; what efforts are being made to ensure service personnel receive their full rest and recuperation entitlement; and if he will make a statement. [161480]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Rest and recuperation periods for service personnel serving on operations abroad are not an entitlement, personnel are only released if the operational situation allows. Every effort is taken to ensure service personnel rest and recuperation periods are maximised within the allowances of the regulations and mitigating action is taken where possible if periods are excessively disrupted.

Second World War Anniversary Celebrations

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what role he envisages for local authorities in marking *(a)* VE Day and *(b)* VJ Day outside London. [158705]

Mr. Caplin: On 1 March 2004 I announced to the House that there will be a national celebration and commemoration of the end of the Second World War on Sunday 10 July 2005. The main event will be in London. However, I very much hope that other towns and cities across the United Kingdom will stage their own events on that day. Planning is at an early stage and I expect to be able to inform the House further about progress later in the year.

Warships

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for the decommissioning of *(a)* HMS Norfolk and *(b)* HMS Iron Duke. [161913]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 15 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 49–50W, which provided details of current decommissioning plans for HMS Norfolk and HMS Iron Duke.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Condover Hall School

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children at Condover Hall School have been found alternative school places for when the school closes. [161552]

Margaret Hodge: Condover Hall is proposed for closure in July this year. Of the 30 pupils currently on roll at the School, two pupils will be entering post-16 provision in the Summer term, four have received written confirmation of an alternative place and the remainder have either had conditional offers, subject to assessment, or parents are still considering various options. RNIB is confident that all the pupils will have an alternative school place before Condover closes on 16 July 2004.

Education (Ribble Valley)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many spare places have been available at the beginning of each school year since 1997–98 at each school in the Ribble Valley constituency. [161809]

Mr. Miliband: The number of spare places at each school in the Ribble Valley constituency since 1997–98 provided by the Department's annual surplus places survey is set out in the following tables. The figures state the position as at January each year, adjusted for the summer term intake. We do not have figures for 2001–02 as there was no surplus places survey in that year.

School year	*1997 –98*	*1998 –99*	*1999 –2000*	*2000 –01*	*2002 –03*
Primary					
Alston Lane Catholic Primary School, Longridge	0	0	0	0	0
Balderstone St. Leonard's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	0	0	0	23	10
Barrow School	0	0	0	0	1
Barton St. Lawrence Church of England Primary School	86	80	81	83	94

School year	1997 –98	1998 –99	1999 –2000	2000 –01	2002 –03
Bolton by Bowland Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	17	18	16	12	4
Brabins Endowed School	63	64	74	74	8
Chatburn Church of England Primary School	31	25	24	39	13
Clitheroe Brookside Primary School	5	5	3	35	0
Clitheroe Pendle Primary School	0	0	0	0	45
Coupe Green Primary School	12	9	25	29	15
Edisford Primary School	22	23	0	0	16
Fulwood and Cadley Primary School	0	0	3	6	0
Fulwood, St. Peter's Church of England Primary School	0	0	0	0	37
Gisburn Primary School	17	5	8	13	5
Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School	0	0	14	21	20
Goosnargh Whitechapel Primary School	14	6	5	8	24
Grimsargh St. Michael's Church of England Primary School	3	0	0	9	34
Grindleton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	0	0	1	8	16
Harris Primary School	0	0	0	0	0
Higher Walton Church of England Primary School	3	2	0	0	10
Kennington Primary School	0	0	0	2	0
Langho and Billington St. Leonards CofE Primary School	8	0	0	0	0
Longridge Church of England Primary School	9	11	4	16	30
Longridge Primary School	16	31	19	13	0
Longridge St. Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Primary School	0	0	0	40	35
Longsands Community Primary School	16	0	22	3	0
Mellor St. Mary Church of England Primary School	0	0	0	0	0
Our Lady and St. Edward's Catholic Primary School, Preston	0	0	0	24	28
Queen's Drive Primary School	0	0	0	0	0
Read St. John's CofE Primary School	0	0	0	0	21
Ribchester St. Wilfrid's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	0	0	1	1	11
Sabden Primary School	26	28	31	26	0
Salesbury Church of England Primary School	—	0	0	0	25
Samlesbury Church of England School	4	9	12	15	11
Sherwood Primary School	4	0	0	3	0
Simonstone St.Peter's Church of England Primary School	0	0	0	4	0
Slaidburn Brennands Endowed Primary School	9	11	19	21	24
St. Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Fulwood, Preston	0	0	0	0	5
St. Clare's Catholic Primary School, Preston	0	0	13	13	1
St.Francis Catholic Primary School, Goosnargh	0	0	0	1	13
St. James' Church of England Primary School, Clitheroe	19	22	9	17	41
St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, HurSt.Green	24	22	24	23	7
St. Mary and St. Andrew's Catholic Primary School,	1	0	2	9	0
Barton Newsham St. Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Chipping	18	19	18	21	22
St. Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Langho	0	0	0	0	0
St. Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Osbaldeston	14	17	16	13	0
St. Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Sabden	53	54	52	54	38
St. Michael and St. John's Roman Catholic Primary School, Clitheroe	—	0	0	0	6
Thorneyholme Roman Catholic Primary School, Dunsop Bridge	25	23	24	46	15
Waddington and West Bradford Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	32	24	43	48	25
Whalley Church of England Primary School	0	0	0	15	0
Total	551	508	563	788	710
Secondary					
Bowland High School	0	0	0	0	87
Clitheroe Royal Grammar School	—	81	65	0	58
Corpus Christi Catholic High School	58	29	0	0	87
Fulwood High School and Arts College	0	0	0	0	17
Longridge High School	55	43	22	24	3
Our Lady's Catholic High School	0	0	0	0	0
Ribblesdale High School Technology College	0	0	6	0	0
St. Augustine's Roman Catholic High School, Billington	0	0	0	0	0
St. Cecilia's Roman Catholic High School, Longridge	0	0	0	58	0
Total	113	153	93	82	252

Free Places (Burton)

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many free places were available for *(a)* three-year olds and *(b)* four-year olds in the Burton constituency in each of the last seven years. [161841]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the form requested.

Figures on the number of free nursery education places taken up by three and four year olds in Staffordshire local education authority area are shown in the table.

The latest figures on provision for 3 and 4 year olds in England were published in a Statistical Bulletin 'Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2003' which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

We have made the commitment that by April 2004, six months ahead of our original target, all three year olds in England whose parents want one, will have access to a free, part-time early education place.

Number of free nursery education places[1, 2] taken up by three and four year old children in maintained nursery and primary schools and private, voluntary and independent providers Staffordshire Local Education Authority area from 1997–2003

	Position in January each year	
	3 year-olds	*4 year-olds*
1997	3,500	9,600
1998	2,700	9,700
1999	2,700	9,500
2000	2,600	9,400
2001	3,000	9,200
2002	4,300	9,100
2003	5,800	9,200

[1] Part-time equivalent number of free nursery education places taken up by 3 and 4 year old children.

[2] A free nursery education place comprises 5, two and ½ hour sessions of early years education per week, for 33 weeks of the year, usually three terms of 11 weeks.

Learning and Skills Councils

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what services are contracted out to external providers through the Learning and Skills Council; and if he will make a statement. [161917]

Alan Johnson: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has the responsibility to plan, fund, monitor and drive up the quality of post-16 learning in England, apart from higher education. It has the power to give funding to others for the purpose of fulfilling its duties and exercising its powers. The detail of any such arrangement is a matter for the LSC and I have asked Mark Haysom, the Chief Executive, to reply to you direct, copying his reply to me.

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance he has given the Learning and Skills Councils on consulting *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* local communities on the provision of further education in their areas. [162106]

Alan Johnson: The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) to consult relevant local authorities and regional development agencies in drawing up their plans for the provision of education and training, including further education. The Secretary of State's remit letter for the LSC also emphasised the Council could only succeed if it worked in partnership with a wide range of stakeholder organisations. I would expect local LSCs to involve a wide range of interested parties, including hon. Members, when developing their plans to meet the needs of local businesses and communities.

National Childcare Strategy

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have gained from the National Childcare Strategy in Chorley; and if he will make a statement. [161598]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the number of new child care places created in an individual constituency is available only from 1999. Lancashire local authority reported that between April 1999 and December 2003, the latest date for which information is currently available, 1,306 new child care places opened in Chorley constituency. A place typically helps more than one child, as not all children take up places full-time, and we estimate these places will help some 2,300 children. During the same period, Lancashire reported that 620 child care places closed in Chorley, so that the stock of child care places rose by 686.

Neighbourhood Nurseries

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what budget *(a)* was set for 2003–04 and *(b)* has been allocated for 2004–05 and 2005–06 by each relevant Government department for neighbourhood nurseries, broken down by English region. [161652]

Margaret Hodge: Under the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative both revenue and capital funding has been made available to local authorities to support the development and delivery of new, affordable child care places in the 20 per cent. most disadvantaged wards. Revenue funding of up to £5,400 for each new child care place created is awarded from when the nursery opens and is paid over a three year period. Capital funding is being provided through the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) and DfES to assist in the creation of new nurseries.

The total budget (revenue and capital) which was set in 2003–04 and current indicative allocations for 2004–05 and 2005–06 for neighbourhood nurseries by English region is given in the table. NOF capital grant is allocated to individual projects and annual spend is determined by the progress in building the nurseries. The figures therefore represent the total NOF capital grant by English region up to the period 2005–06.

£

	2003–04		2004–05			2005–06	Total NOF Capital
	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	
Eastern	3,518,124	1,664,488	5,558,304	170,000	3,517,693	0	6,884,043
East Mids	4,391,406	815,945	7,342,813	200,000	4,131,861	0	6,649,810
London	11,817,850	4,922,925	19,592,251	1,351,772	12,377,269	0	15,103,330
North East	8,500,085	1,979,684	13,120,272	93,300	6,895,193	0	9,991,977
North West	13,689,459	3,053,468	22,099,975	440,260	13,600,256	0	19,238,032
South East	4,751,511	2,542,230	8,262,153	0	4,923,045	0	8,431,051
South West	5,122,601	1,496,178	9,370,252	0	5,183,311	0	9,218,990
West Mids	7,954,985	2,059,416	14,479,010	240,000	8,298,485	0	12,743,743
Yorks and Humbs	9,028,856	1,712,527	14,687,917	207,000	8,015,647	0	11,739,025
Totals	68,774,877	20,246,861	114,512,947	2,702,332	66,942,759	0	100,000,000

Nurseries

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many new nurseries have been established in Chorley since 1997. [161597]

Margaret Hodge: Lancashire county council is responsible for determining local need for nursery provision in Chorley and holding information on current provision. The only new nursery set up since 1997 under a central government initiative in Chorley, is the Neighbourhood Nursery due to open in May 2004 providing 50 full day care places.

School Funding (Staffordshire)

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much total capital expenditure has been spent on schools in *(a)* Burton constituency and *(b)* Staffordshire in each of the last 10 years. [161849]

Mr. Miliband: The majority of capital funding is allocated to local authorities and schools by needs related formulae, linked to locally agreed asset management planning processes. This allows decisions on how these resources should be invested to be taken locally. The following table shows total capital allocations to the Staffordshire local education authority area since 1996–97, the earliest year for which reliable information is readily available.

Capital allocations to Staffordshire LEA

	Allocation (£000)
1996–97	3,685
1997–98	7,421
1998–99	25,935
1999–2000	15,549
2000–01	31,145
2001–02	23,096
2002–03	26,601
2003–04	35,529

Note:
The allocations include the Voluntary Aided sector.

School Sports Halls (Burton)

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been invested in school sports halls in Burton constituency in each year since 1996, broken down by school. [161850]

Mr. Miliband: The Department does not hold information on how much has been spent on sports halls. Schools premises investment decisions are based on local education authority asset management planning processes and this information should therefore be available locally.

SEN (Performance Targets)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to introduce performance targets for pupils with special educational needs. [161233]

Mr. Miliband: All maintained schools are required to set targets for their pupils including those with special educational needs (SEN) by virtue of The Education (School Performance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations which came into force in 2001.

In addition to routine monitoring of a child's progress by their teacher, each child with SEN is expected to have short-term educational and development targets set for them during the course of the year. These targets form part of their individual education plan which should be reviewed on a regular basis before new targets are set.

"Removing Barriers to Achievement: the Government's Strategy for SEN", launched last month, strengthens the focus on pupil progress and achievement. One of the key measures is Mailing and guidance on how schools can make effective use of routine tests, tasks and other forms of assessment to inform target-setting and reporting on pupil progress.

We will also be supporting all schools with pupils working at the very lowest level of the National Curriculum, by promoting the use of P-Scales and providing guidance on moderation to support consistent assessment and collection of P-Scale results in 2005.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Middle East

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to the Israeli Government regarding water supplies to people living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. [161331]

Hilary Benn: The Government have frequently made representations to the Israeli authorities, both bilaterally and through the European Union, about the destruction of water infrastructure and access to safe water supplies, including as a result of the building of the separation barrier.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the provision of clean water to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. [161330]

Hilary Benn: About a third of West Bank communities still depend on local springs and harvesting cisterns to get their water. It is often not suitable for drinking. Per capita, consumption is decreasing, from 95 cubic metres per year per capita in 1997 to 67 cubic metres per year per capita in year 2000. Figures for subsequent years are not available but the impact of the intifada has increased problems with access to clean water for many families. DFID supports the Palestinian Water Authority in its analysis of available water resources. This includes a project to model the western aquifer and predict the sustainable yields.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the sources of water in the West Bank appropriated by Israel during the construction of the security fence. [161332]

Hilary Benn: The security fence is causing severe problems in access to water for Palestinian civilians and farmers, which is damaging the Palestinian agricultural economy. Once the western section of the Wall is completed, it is estimated that the annual value of agricultural production in the West Bank will decrease by 22.8 per cent. In Qalqilya alone 15 of the city's 39 wells have been confiscated or isolated, representing over one-third of the city's water supply.

DFID supports the Palestinian Water Authority in its analysis of the shared Western Aquifer and the Palestinian Negotiations Support Unit in its preparatory work for final status negotiations on sharing water resources with Israel. This has helped Palestinian analysis of the water sources appropriated by the building of the barrier.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the work of the Parents' Circle in the West Bank and Gaza. [161489]

Hilary Benn: The Parents' Circle provides support to bereaved Israelis and Palestinians who have lost family members as a result of the conflict. It plays an important campaigning and advocacy role, providing lectures for school children and disseminating information on the conflict to the wider general public. Civil society organisations like Parents' Circle can play a useful role in conflict situations by reducing tensions, bringing ordinary people together.

Civil Society Organisations

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the UK-based civil society organisations that received contributions from his Department in 2002. [161404]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: This information is not readily available in respect of calendar years and could be obtained only by incurring a disproportionate cost. However, the list of UK based civil society organisations that DFID has provided funding to in the financial year 2002–03 will be placed in the Libraries of the House of Commons under the title "List of UK Civil Society Organisations Receiving Contributions from DFID (PQ reference 161404)".

In addition, a number of CSOs receive funding direct from our country offices.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much funding was received by each UK-based civil society organisation from his Department in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [161405]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: This information is not readily available in respect of calendar years and can be obtained only by incurring a disproportionate cost. However, the funding DFID has provided to UK based civil society organisations in the financial years 2001–02 and 2002–03 is available and will be placed in the Libraries of the House of Commons under the title "UK Civil Society Organisations Funded by DFID (Hansard PQ ref 161405)".

This information relates to the UK CSOs which receive funding directly from DFID headquarters. In addition, a number of CSOs receive funding direct from our country offices.

Commission for Africa

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to his statement of 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 55WS, on the Commission for Africa, what further commissioners have been appointed; and how many commissioners are planned in total. [161385]

Hilary Benn: The 10 confirmed Commissioners on the Commission for Africa are the Prime Minister, Chancellor Gordon Brown, myself, Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia, K.Y. Amoako (Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa), Trevor Manuel (South African Finance Minister), Michel Camdessus (French Africa Personal Representative), Mrs. Nancy Kassebaum Baker (Former US Senator), Ralph Goodale (Canadian Finance Minister) and Bob Geldof. Five more invitations are outstanding. There will be no more than 15 Commissioners in total.

Millennium Development Goals

Ian Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will include in the Departmental Report for 2004 a statement on *(a)* the progress made on and *(b)* the resources invested in the Millennium Development Goal targets for increases in access to drinking water and basic sanitation. [161372]

Hilary Benn: DFID's departmental report 2004 will set out our broad strategy on water and sanitation. It will stress the importance of working with partner governments through their Poverty Reduction Strategies and of providing support to a range of

multilateral initiatives. DFID's Water Action Plan published by the Department in March 2004, contains the following central elements:

Evidence of the links between water and the other Millennium Development Goals

A focus on a number of international partnerships and networks that create coherence and consistency in the water sector

The incorporation of water issues into DFID's discussions on water policy with partner countries

DFID's programme for action at country, regional and international level

The Water Action Plan also includes a breakdown of the bilateral financial resources invested in the development of water and sanitation services and an explanation of other DFID funding through non-governmental organisations and multilateral partners.

Copies are available at www.dfid.gov.uk

Further information detailing financial expenditure on specific sectors is included in Statistics on International Development 1998–99–2002–03, published in October 2003. This also outlines progress made towards the MDG targets for increasing access to water and basic sanitation.

Queries relating to Statistics on International Development should be addressed to: statsmis@dfid.gov.uk

Tanzania

Mr. Trend: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the implications for UK aid to Tanzania of Tanzania's decision to purchase an aircraft for its President. [161512]

Hilary Benn: The purchase and cost of the Government aircraft has been included both in the 2002–03 and 2003–04 budgets. It has been debated in Parliament as part of the budget speech discussions and further sessions. Our budget support is to enable the Government of Tanzania to implement its Poverty Reduction Strategy. Resource allocation decisions are for the Government of Tanzania to make. Allocations to priority sectors for poverty reduction have increased in absolute terms year on year since 2000.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what account he takes of the domestic budget priorities of the Zimbabwe Government when assessing humanitarian aid to the country. [161488]

Hilary Benn: There is an internationally agreed process through which the Government of Zimbabwe and the Office of the United Nations Humanitarian Co-ordinator agree annually a "Consolidated Appeal" in consultation with all other humanitarian stakeholders. The humanitarian appeal takes account of what the Government of Zimbabwe plans and is reasonably expected to do within its own resources. But we have not held back our assistance because of clearly poor policies of the Government of Zimbabwe, including on budget allocation. To do so would be to punish poor and vulnerable citizens of Zimbabwe for the actions of a Government whose legitimacy is questioned.

DFID has supported those elements of the Consolidated Appeal that provide humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable members of Zimbabwean society. The efficiency of the response is often hindered by the lack of transparency surrounding Government plans and programmes—particularly in the case of the State monopoly Grain Marketing Board. DFID, through the UN and with our development partners, continues to advocate for greater transparency on state spending from the Government of Zimbabwe.

CABINET OFFICE

Emergency Planning College

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what arrangements he will make for hon. Members to visit the Emergency Planning College to see the training taking place. [158983]

Mr. Alexander: I am always content to consider requests from hon. Members to visit the Emergency Planning College. From October 2004 the commissioning of its new buildings will be complete and the new programme of courses under way.

Better Regulation Task Force

Tony Wright: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to his written Statement on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 61WS, on the Regulation Task Force Report, Independent Regulators, who is leading this review; what its remit is; what resources are at its disposal; when it is likely to report; whether the report will be made public; and if he will make a statement. [159481]

Mr. Alexander: The review of public bodies referred to in my written statement of 9 February 2004 on the Better Regulation Task Force Report 'Independent Regulators' was prompted by the Public Administration Select Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2002–2003 'Government by Appointment: Opening Up the Patronage State' (HC 165). In response to the first recommendation of that report the Government stated that:

"The Government agrees with the Committee that the variety and complexity of public bodies sponsored by central Government Departments supports the need for a review of their definition and scope. The Cabinet Office will therefore undertake a review of the types of body currently in existence and the outcome of this will feed into the work proposed in response to recommendations 4 and 5."

The Review is being carried out by the Cabinet Office within existing resources and work is expected to be complete by the end of December 2004. The final report will review the types of body currently in existence and will be made publicly available on the Cabinet Office website.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on the action taken by the Government in response to recommendations made by the Better Regulation Task Force. [161957]

Mr. Alexander: Since it was established in 1997, the Better Regulation Task Force has made around 400 recommendations to Government. All but 10 have been accepted.

Recent actions in response to Task Force recommendations include the announcement of common commencement dates for domestic employment regulations and the strengthening of guidance on Government consultation.

The Task Force monitors the Government's implementation of its recommendations.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to his answer of 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1397W, on the Better Regulation Task Force, if he will break down the cost of the task force by inquiry. [162020]

Mr. Alexander: Published inquiries are only one aspect of the Better Regulation Task Force's work. The cost of individual inquiries cannot be disaggregated from the Task Force's overall running costs.

Disabled Civil Servants

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what plans he has to change the target for recruitment of people with disabilities to the Civil Service; and if he will make a statement. [161959]

Mr. Alexander: The Government remain committed to increasing the proportion of people with disabilities in the Civil Service. As of April 2003, disabled staff accounted for 3.6 per cent. of the Civil service, up from 2.8 per cent. in 1995. A service-wide target has been set at 3.0per cent. disabled people in the senior Civil Service by 2004–05. There are no present plans to change this target.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what recent steps he has taken to increase the number of people with disabilities in the Civil Service. [162010]

Mr. Alexander: The Government remain committed to increasing the number of people with disabilities in the Civil Service. The Cabinet Office promotes outreach initiatives, including: a Summer Placement Scheme to encourage disabled applicants to join the graduate Fast Stream; and participation in WORKSTEP, a Government initiative to help disabled people to progress to mainstream employment where appropriate.

Lord Birt

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether Lord Birt has an office in Government premises. [161908]

Mr. Alexander: Lord Birt is the Prime Minister's unpaid strategy adviser and is based at No. 10.

Permanent Secretary of Government Communications

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office when he expects the Permanent Secretary of Government Communications to become operationally functional. [161952]

Mr. Alexander: We are in the final stages of the selection process for the Permanent Secretary Government Communications. We expect to announce an appointment shortly. The successful candidate will take up post as soon as they can, taking forward work and leading people already contributing to improvements in Government communications.

Red Tape

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to his answer of 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1399W, on the Regulatory Impact Unit, on what statistical basis the statement that the UK has almost the lowest administration cost and fewer regulations for entrepreneurs than any other EU country was made; and if he will make a statement. [161962]

Mr. Alexander: The statistical basis for this assessment was published in an OECD working paper, published on 13 January 2003, entitled "Regulation, Productivity and Growth: OECD Evidence". Recent assessments by the World Bank and KPMG have drawn similar conclusions.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Freedom of Information Act (Annual Report)

Llew Smith: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many copies of the annual report on the bringing into force of provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 published in November 2003 were printed; how the report was publicised; and how many imprints have been recorded to date showing visits to the URL for the report on his Department's website. [161177]

Mr. Lammy: 1,000 copies of this report were printed. Publication was announced to both Houses by means of Written Ministerial Statements *Official Report* column 40WS on 27 November 2003 and my Department issued a press release on 28 November 2003. Up to the end of February 2004, the URL for the report was visited 1,076 times and the relevant document was downloaded 4,846 times.

Freedom of Information Act (Costs)

Llew Smith: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what has been the cost to date to *(a)* Government Departments and *(b)* non-Departmental public bodies subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 of the steps taken to implement that Act; and what estimate he has made of the costs that will be incurred by the time the Act comes fully into force. [161189]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested in points *(a)* and *(b)* of the hon. Member's question is not held centrally. However, we estimate that the cost to date of implementing FOI within my Department has been £180,207.

No recent estimate has been made of the collective costs that will be incurred by all departments and non-Departmental public bodies by the time the Act comes

into force. For my own Department, projected costs of implementation for the period March 2004 to January 2005 are a further £107,667.

Although no additional money is being made available centrally for implementing FOI, the cost of implementation should be considered in the light of the organisational and public benefits that it will bring through improved record keeping and relationships with the public, better decision making and greater public confidence in those decisions.

Guantanamo Detainees

Llew Smith: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the British former detainees held at the prison camp in Guantanamo in Cuba would be eligible to claim financial aid to support a case to sue the United States authorities for compensation for unlawful detention. [161759]

Mr. Lammy: The legal aid scheme for England and Wales can only cover proceedings in this jurisdiction. Legal aid is not available for proceeding in the United States courts.

For any proceedings properly brought in England and Wales, legal aid may be available subject to a standard financial means and legal merits test. The Legal Services Commission considers all cases objectively against these criteria before deciding whether or not to fund a case.

Northern Ireland Court Service

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs, what authority there is for the exclusion of Irish nationals are from reserved posts in the Northern Ireland Court Service. [160427]

Mr. Leslie: Posts in the Northern Ireland Court Service are reserved in accordance with the Civil Service Nationality Rules.

Rape

Ms Keeble: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on the action he is taking to improve the administration of rape cases in Northamptonshire; [161635]

(2) what steps he is taking to prevent delays in court hearings of rape cases. [161636]

Mr. Leslie: The listing of cases in the courts is a judicial function, although the administration of the task is delegated to an official who operates within parameters set by and in accordance with the policy established by the judiciary. Top priority is always given to the early allocation of a fixed date for the trial of rape cases in the Crown Court. Court staff make every effort to try to ensure that the trial goes ahead on the date and at the time specified, so that the parties and their witnesses are not brought to court unnecessarily. The Effective Trial Management Programme is also working to improve case preparation and progression, to achieve successful outcomes.

The situation in this respect applies to Northamptonshire cases as it does to cases proceeding in all other venues of the Crown Court.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Council Tax

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his Answer of 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 820W, on council tax, what total additional revenue support grant has been allocated to Durham as a result of the council tax base reduction because of the number of student exemptions. [159464]

Mr. Raynsford: It is not possible to give a meaningful value for the total additional revenue support grant that has been allocated to Durham as a result of the council tax base reduction because of the number of student exemptions.

That is because, to do so, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would first need to calculate a taxbase that included the properties currently excluded because of student exemptions for all authorities. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not have any information about whether these properties would have otherwise been subject to different discounts or exemptions (e.g. single-person discount).

This new taxbase would then need to be used to recalculate Revenue Support Grant (RSG). This is likely to result in a different distribution of grant before floors and ceilings to authorities. The existing levels of floors and ceilings may then be inappropriate with this new distribution; it would certainly change the scaling factors on grant increases above the floor published in the Local Government Finance Report (England) 2004–05.

The number of properties covered by student exemptions is no longer collected by band of property. The latest year for which this information was available was 2002–03. In 2002–03 Durham City had one class K exemptions (an empty dwelling owned by a student who last lived in the dwelling as their main home), 129 class M exemptions (for halls of residence) and 728 class N exemptions (for dwellings occupied only by students, the foreign spouses of students, or school and college leavers). This is the equivalent of about 828 Band D properties. The Standard Tax Element for shire districts for 2002–03 was £97.2073276605. Therefore under the assumptions specified in the Local Government Finance Report (England) 2002–03, Durham City would have been able to raise a further £80,444.46 had these properties not had student exemptions. An equivalent amount of RSG before floors and ceilings was therefore provided to Durham City with respect to the properties with student exemptions.

English Partnerships

Brian White: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what energy efficiency targets he has set for English Partnerships. [161198]

Phil Hope: English Partnerships (EP) has established its own energy efficiency targets for all new homes, retail, office and industrial buildings constructed on its land. For all developments it applies the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) standards; in addition, for residential projects, it applies National Home Energy Rating (NHER) standards, which have been devised by the National Energy Foundation.

Where it is the main or sole partner in a development, EP's aim is to achieve BREEAM "Very good" standards and NHER 9.0 ratings.

In all of the seven Millennium Community developments and a number of other EP landmark or exemplar schemes BREEAM "Excellent" and NHER 10.0 standards will be achieved. All residential schemes in Milton Keynes achieve NHER 10.0.

The Millennium Community programme also seeks to achieve other higher environmental and construction targets.

Fire Service

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what estimate his Department has made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* cost of redundancies that would arise from merging Fire and Rescue control rooms into nine regional control centres; [161439]

(2) what estimate his Department has made of the total cost of merging Fire and Rescue control rooms into nine regional control centres. [161440]

Mr. Raynsford: The Mott MacDonald report, on the "Future of Fire and Rescue Service Control Rooms in England and Wales", published on 11 December 2003, includes estimates of the costs and benefits of establishing regional fire and rescue control rooms. These include estimates of both the number of posts that will no longer be required and redundancy costs. Copies were made available in the Library of the House.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Mr. Reed: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received on extending the definition of houses in multiple occupation to include student houses occupied by fewer than five persons; and if he will make a statement. [161967]

Keith Hill: Representations have been received from the National Union Of Students (NUS), other student representative bodies, the Houses in Multiple Occupation Network and some local authorities to extend the scope of mandatory licensing of HMOs to include student houses occupied by fewer than five persons.

The Housing Bill provides that accommodation shared by students (but excluding halls of residence managed by the university) will be classified as HMOs. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made it clear that the scope of the mandatory licensing of HMOs, as prescribed by secondary legislation, is currently proposed to apply to HMOs that are three storeys and more and occupied by at least five persons who constitute more than one household. This will cover a great many shared student houses.

The Government has always stressed that the provisions in the Housing Bill are concerned with dealing with the worst standards of management and physical conditions in the private rented sector, particularly the larger HMOs that present the greatest risks. However, the Bill does give local authorities a discretionary power to license smaller HMOs if there is a need to do so, in order that the welfare, health and safety of the occupiers are protected.

Mr. Reed: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much is being paid to Charnwood borough council through the Revenue Support Grant in 2003–04 to compensate for council tax revenue lost as a result of the exemption for houses in multiple occupation occupied solely by students; and if he will make a statement. [162015]

Mr. Raynsford: It is not possible to give a meaningful value for the total additional revenue support grant that has been allocated to Charnwood as a result of the council tax base reduction because of the number of student exemptions.

That is because, to do so, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would first need to calculate a tax base that included the properties currently excluded because of student exemptions for all authorities. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not have any information about whether these properties would have otherwise been subject to different discounts or exemptions (e.g. single-person discount).

This new tax base would then need to be used to recalculate Revenue Support Grant. This is likely to result in a different distribution of grant before floors and ceilings to authorities. The existing levels of floors and ceilings may then be inappropriate with this new distribution; it would certainly change the scaling factors on grant increases above the floor published in the Local Government Finance Report (England) 2004–05.

However, for 2002–03 an approximate calculation is shown as follows. The number of properties covered by student exemptions is no longer collected by band of property. The latest year for which this information was available was 2002–03. In 2002–03 Charnwood had 512 class N exemptions (for dwellings occupied only by students, the foreign spouses of students, or school and college leavers). This is the equivalent of about 400 Band D properties. The Standard Tax Element for shire districts for 2002–03 was £97.2073276605. Therefore under the assumptions specified in the Local Government Finance Report (England) 2002–03, Charnwood would have been able to raise a further £38,904.53 had these properties not had student exemptions. An equivalent amount of RSG before

floors and ceilings was therefore provided to Charnwood with respect to the properties with student exemptions.

Local Government

Harry Cohen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what information he collects on the percentage of annual local authority staffing costs spent on training. [162088]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the aggregate revenue expenditure of councils in England was in each year since 1993–94; and what percentage of that expenditure was funded by *(a)* government grant, *(b)* non-domestic rates and *(c)* council tax in each year. [161501]

Mr. Raynsford: The amount of aggregate revenue expenditure of councils in England in each year since 1993–94 and what percentage of that expenditure was funded by *(a)* government grant, *(b)* non-domestic rates and *(c)* council tax in each year is tabled as follows.

Funding of revenue expenditure

	Revenue expenditure[1]	*Government grant*[2]		*Non-domestic rates*[3]		*Council tax*[4]	
	£ billion	*£ billion*	*Percentage*	*£ billion*	*Percentage*	*£ billion*	*Percentage*
1993–94	41.506	21.685	52	11.584	28	8.912	21
1994–95	43.602	23.679	54	10.692	25	9.239	21
1995–96	44.827	23.335	52	11.361	25	9.777	22
1996–97	46.532	23.003	49	12.743	27	10.461	22
1997–98	47.256	23.840	50	12.034	25	11.241	24
1998–99	50.189	25.291	50	12.531	25	12.332	25
1999–00	53.651	26.421	49	13.619	25	13.278	25
2000–01	57.329	27.809	49	15.407	27	14.200	25
2001–02	61.952	31.469	50	15.144	24	15.246	25
2002–03	65.919	32.648	50	16.632	25	16.648	25
2003–04[5]	72.473	37.517	52	15.618	22	18.946	26

[1] Expenditure financed from revenue support grant, specific grants within AEF, special grants, non-domestic rates, council taxes and balances. Also includes SSA reduction grant (1994–95 onwards), police grant (1995–96 onwards), Central Support Protection Grant (1990–2000 to 2001–02) and General Greater London Authority Grant (2000–01 onwards). This column is not the total of the others. The difference is due to funding by balances and other adjustments.

[2] Revenue support grants, specific and special grants within AEF, SSA reduction grant (1994–95 onwards), police grant (1995–96 onwards), Central Support Protection grant (1999–2000 to 2001–02) and General GLA grant (2000–01 onwards).

[3] includes City offset.

[4] Gross of council tax benefit and council tax transitional reduction scheme.

[5] Budget estimates

Planning Applications (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average length of time is for processing planning applications in Greater London. [162345]

Keith Hill: The information available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is the percentages of applications for planning permission and related consents which are decided within eight weeks, between eight and 13 weeks and in more than 13 weeks. The statistics are used to monitor performance against the Government targets that 60 per cent. of applications for major development should be decided within 13 weeks, that 65 per cent. of applications for minor development should be decided within eight weeks, and that 80 per cent. of applications for other development (predominantly householder applications) should be decided within eight weeks.

In the July to September 2003 quarter, London boroughs collectively decided 56 per cent. of major applications within 13 weeks, 65 per cent. of minor applications within eight weeks and 78 per cent. of other applications within eight weeks.

Port Clarence

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his Answer of 4 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1106W, on Port Clarence, Stockton, whether future involvement of English Partnerships and One North East in the development of Port Clarence would be subject to EU regulations concerning shipbuilding subsidies. [160788]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

Any proposals for port and associated developments that are of potential assistance to commercial shipbuilding would be subject to the EU framework on state aid for shipbuilding (2003/C 317/06). However, these considerations do not apply where such developments are clearly for the sole benefit of naval shipbuilding, since military vessels are excluded from the provisions of the framework.

R and D

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister to whom his Department distributes expenditure on research and development; how many staff are employed as a result; and how many research establishments *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies have in each region of England. [154358]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not distribute expenditure on research and development to external bodies and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and its agencies do not have research establishments.

HEALTH

Drug Treatment (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in Crosby are receiving drug treatment. [160623]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Crosby is part of Sefton drug action team. There were 936 people receiving drug treatment in Sefton in 2000–01. This is the latest available data. Data broken down by drug action team for 2001–02 and 2002–03 have not yet been finalised and published.

Biomedical Sciences

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what bursaries are available for the training of biomedical scientists in the NHS; and on what criteria bursaries are awarded to support *(a)* paramedical services and *(b)* professions supplementary to medicine. [161013]

Mr. Hutton: National Health Service bursaries are available to students who attend any one of a range of degree or higher education diploma-level health professional courses commissioned and funded by strategic health authority workforce directorates.

Biomedical scientists will usually have attended a non-NHS vocational degree course where the funding for the course and student support arrangements fall under the Department for Education and Skills' general arrangements for students. This is followed by pre-registration training where they are paid a salary and work under a qualified biomedical scientist whilst gaining experience leading to state registration.

Training for the paramedical services is not usually undertaken by means of undergraduate or equivalent courses, instead it is usually done through employment-based training and short vocational courses. In-service candidates are funded by ambulance trusts from their own budgets.

NHS bursaries are available to students undertaking undergraduate courses leading to professional registration in a range of professions supplementary to medicine, now referred to as allied health professions. The aim of this policy is to support recruitment to those professions supported under the scheme and hence to those branches of health care.

Breast Feeding

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evidence he has collated about the relationship between breast feeding and obesity. [161345]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* In 2002, the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition Policy reviewed the benefits of breastfeeding in its Scientific Review of the Welfare Food Scheme and stated that breastfed babies are less likely to become overweight as children. Since then, a further review in 2003, by Dewey et al, found that most large studies show a protective effect of breastfeeding against overweight in children and adolescents.

The continued protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding remains a major public health priority. Further work is being undertaken by the Health Development Agency, which has appointed two collaborating centres in maternal and child nutrition. Their work will include increasing the body of evidence.

Cancer

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects his Department's cancer genetic risk assessment trials to be completed. [160073]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We announced in the White Paper, Our Inheritance, Our Future—Realising the potential of genetics in the NHS, published on 24 June 2003, that the Department would be co-funding, in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Relief, a programme of pilot projects to support people who have a family history which suggests that they may have an increased risk of developing certain types of cancer.

My noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, announced the £1.5 million programme setting up four pilot sites on 20 February 2004. The pilot services will offer genetic assessment to appropriate individuals, but this is not a trial of genetic risk assessment per se. The pilots will, rather, test out ways to provide an integrated service for individuals who are, or are concerned that they may be, at increased risk of cancer due to genetic factors. The pilot sites will run for up to three years and will be evaluated to ensure lessons about how best to deliver this type of service can be shared by the wider National Health Service.

There are other relevant developments in the area of assessment of genetic risk of cancer. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence is preparing guidance for the NHS in England and Wales on the identification and management of genetic risk of familial breast cancer. This is due to be published shortly and is expected to include guidance on how to assess risk and when it is appropriate to refer individuals for genetic testing.

Care Homes

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken to ensure that appropriate procedures are being put in place to monitor the quality and effectiveness of methods for dealing with complaints in relation to care homes, in the transition from the National Care Standards Commission to the Commission for Social Care Inspection. [161830]

Dr. Ladyman: The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) will, at least initially, continue to use the same procedures that the National Care Standards Commission uses for dealing with complaints about regulated services and monitoring the quality and effectiveness of those procedures.

The CSCI Commissioners have endorsed a decision to set up a CSCI complaints project board. One of the board's key objectives will be to review the effectiveness of the current arrangements for handling complaints about regulated providers under the Care Standards Act.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he plans to take to investigate price differentials between self-funded and publicity-funded residents in care homes, in order to establish whether there is evidence of cross-subsidisation. [161831]

Dr. Ladyman: It is not unusual for service providers to charge different prices, nor to offer discounts for bulk purchasing, for example when councils block contract for a number of places. Care homes are required to provide transparent information so that future residents are aware of the full charge that will be made for the service.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the decision by the Office of Fair Trading to undertake an investigation into the care home market. [161833]

Dr. Ladyman: The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has acknowledged the complexity and changing nature of the care home market, but has also found evidence that the challenges this throws up can and is being met at local level. This confirms the Government's view that local problems are most amenable to local solutions. I am particularly heartened by the OFT's decision to focus in some depth on issues that have a particular bearing on information and choice for consumers. I look forward to reading the findings when they are produced, especially any recommendations for making the market work better for consumers.

Children's Hospices

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what children's hospices are open in England; and where they are situated. [161503]

Dr. Ladyman: There are 28 children's hospices registered with the National Care Standards Commission. They are situated as follows:

Acorns Children's Hospice Birmingham, West Midlands
Acorns Childrens Hospice Walsall, West Midlands
Baby Hospice (Zoe's Place) Life Health Centre, Liverpool
Butterwick Hospice Childrens Unit, Stockton-on-Tees
Children's Hospice South West, Barnstaple, North Devon
Christopher's (Childrens' Hospice) Guildford, Surrey
Claire House Children's Hospice, Bebington, Wirral
Demelza House Children's Hospice, Sittingbourne, Kent
Derian House Children's Hospice, Chorley, Lancashire
East Anglia's Children's Hospice, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire
East Anglia's Children's Hospice Quidenham Norwich, Norfolk
East Anglia's Children's Hospice Suffolk, Ipswich, Suffolk
Eden Valley Hospice Durdar Road, Carlisle, Cumbria
Francis House, Didsbury, Manchester
Haven House (The White House), Woodford Green, Essex
Helen House, Oxford, Oxfordshire
Hope House Children's Respite Hospice, Oswestry, Shropshire
Little Haven Children's Hospice, Benfleet, Essex
Martin House Grove Road, Wetherby, West Yorkshire
Naomi House Children's Hospice, Sutton Scotney, Winchester
Pasque Charity, Luton, Bedfordshire
Rainbows Children's Hospice Loughborough, Leicestershire
Richard House Childrens Hospice, London
St. Andrew's Childrens Hospice, Grimsby, North East Lines
St. Oswald' s Children's Hospice, Newcastle Upon Tyne
The Donna Louise Trust Treetops, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire
Trinity—The Hospice In The Fylde, Blackpool, Lancashire
Zoe's Place, Normanby, Middlesbrough

Cholesterol

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 5 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1160W, on cholesterol, if he will estimate the prevalence of raised blood cholesterol in *(a)* men and *(b)* women in England. [160700]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Figures available from the Health Survey for England 1998 are shown in the table. In this survey, cholesterol was considered to be raised at a level of 6.5mmol/l or over.

Prevalence of raised cholesterol by sex in England, 1998

	Adults 16 + with a valid sample	
	Men	*Women*
Raised cholesterol (Percentage > =6.5mmol/l)	18.1	22.3
Bases (Number)	4846	5428

Source:
Health Survey for England Department of Health.

Cystic Fibrosis Screening

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made to implement his commitment to introduce new-born screening for cystic fibrosis in England in 2004. [161329]

Dr. Ladyman: Ministers announced the implementation of a new national programme for newborn cystic fibrosis screening, subject to further advice from the UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) about screening protocols, costs, feasibility and timetables.

An expert working group of the UK NSC has carefully considered the best way of screening and a robust protocol has now been developed for the screening test and diagnostic follow up. Standards of best practice for laboratory services have also been finalised. These will be considered by the UK NSC at its next meeting in March 2004.

Dentistry

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when amendments to the Dentists Act 1984 to recognise professional complementary dentists will come into force; [161294]

(2) when he expects registrations for professions complementary to dentistry to begin. [161302]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is working with the General Dental Council (GDC) to provide for the registration of appropriately trained professionals complementary to dentistry. An Order to amend the Dentists Act 1984 is being drafted under Section 60 of the Health Act 1999 which, after the necessary consultations, will be laid before Parliament later this year for debate under the affirmative procedure. We expect registration to commence in 2005.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimates he has made of the number of dental technicians who illegally provide dentures direct to the public; how many successful prosecutions have been made for cases of providing illegal dentures; and in how many of these cases harm was caused to a patient; [161295]

(2) what estimates he has made of the number of dentures *(a)* made and *(b)* sold illegally in each of the past five years. [161296]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No figures are available for the number of dentures made or sold by clinical dental technicians. I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam (Mr.Burstow) on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1203W, with regard to the number of prosecutions and convictions for illegal dental practice. Information is not available on whether harm was caused to the patient involved, but I understand that the General Dental Council's decision to prosecute is usually prompted by a complaint from a patient.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans he has to offer training programmes to prospective clinical dental technicians; and how long the training programmes will take to complete; [161298]

(2) whether the General Dental Council will accept qualifications received *(a)* outside the UK and *(b)* outside the EU as valid training for the role of clinical dental technician; [161299]

(3) how long the process of registering as a clinical dental technician will take; [161300]

(4) when the first UK trained clinical dental technician will be able to practise in the UK. [161301]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is working with the General Dental Council (GDC) to provide for the registration of appropriately trained clinical dental technicians (CDTs). An Order to amend the Dentists Act 1984 is being drafted under Section 60 of the Health Act 1999 which, after the necessary consultations, will be laid before Parliament later this year for debate under the affirmative procedure. The GDC will then decide which qualifications will make clinical dental technicians eligible for registration, what account should be taken of any training acquired overseas and the timetable for implementation of the new arrangements. It should be possible for registration to commence in 2005. When the qualifications required are established, we will alert national health service workforce development confederations to the training requirements for this new class of professional complementary to dentistry.

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the implementation of IT in pilot schemes for dentists; and if he will make a statement. [160525]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department of Health has recently made funding, £517,000, available to primary care trusts, via the NHS Modernisation Agency, to support information technology software modifications in some of the Modernisation Agency's Options for Change field sites that are testing alternative models of remuneration for dentists.

In addition, in September 2003 we announced new investment including £30 million for dental information technology. This investment will facilitate integration of National Health Service dentistry within the national programme for IT. It is intended that future IT solutions for dentistry will be consistent with those that are being developed for use across the NHS.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have been recruited to the NHS in each year since 1997 in *(a)* total, *(b)* NHS Trust areas covering Portsmouth and *(c)* NHS Trust areas covering Hampshire. [160770]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the numberentering the general dental service (GDS) or the personal dental service (PDS) is shown in the table for England and Wales, Portsmouth Primary Care Trust (PCT) area and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority (SHA) area.

Number of entrants to the GDS or PDS

	England and Wales	*Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA*	*Portsmouth City PCT*
2002 from 2001	1,619	84	11
2003 from 2002	1,587	89	10

Note:
Dentists include principal dentists, their assistants and trainees. Entrants will include some dentists who left dentistry temporarily in previous years.

Department Branding

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much his Department and its predecessors spent on branding the Department between 1997–98 and 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* consultancy fees, *(b)* design and orders for new stationery, *(c)* website design and *(d)* other material featuring new logos. [154071]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since 1 May 1997, £140,896 has been spent on the development of the current Department of Health identity. This includes new logo design and development, accompanying guidelines and a recent review and update to the guidelines publication.

The cost of design of new stationery carrying the Department of Health logo is included in the above figure. New stationery has always replaced old stationery on a renewal basis.

Branding has not been a factor in the development and redevelopment phases of the Department of Health website.

In January 2000, £3,312.50 was spent on 10 new building signs (two for each site) that carried the new Department of Health logo.

It is not possible to define the cost of producing other materials featuring the Department of Health logo, as branding has not been a factor in their production.

Health Services

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much public money has been spent on health in Chorley in each of the last seven years. [161594]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not available. Allocations made to the former South Lancashire Health Authority and the Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust since 1997 are shown in the table.

Year	*Amount £*
South Lancashire Health Authority	
1997–98	132,480,000
1998–99	138,391,000
1999–2000	185,797,000
2000–01	206,248,000
2001–02	223,342,000
2002–03	247,205,000
Chorley & South Ribble Primary Care Trust	
2003–04	171,696,000

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* nurses and *(b)* doctors are training in Chorley Hospital. [161595]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on doctors in training is collected on a trust basis. The data shown in the table represents the latest available information for the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Trust.

At 30 September 2002	*Number (headcount)*
All doctors in training	243
Of which:	
Registrar	81
Senior House Officer	127
House Officer	35

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

Information on nurse training is not collected on an individual hospital basis, but at strategic health authority (SHA) level. The majority of the training takes place in higher education institutes with clinical placements being undertaken in hospitals. In 2003–04, the Cumbria and Lancashire SHA is funding 1,075 students to start pre-registration nurse training.

Source:
Department of Health MPT quarterly monitoring.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list new medical services available at Chorley Hospital since 1997. [161587]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The new developments listed have been introduced at the Chorley and South District general hospital since 1997:

Service	*Introduced since 1997*
Additional new medical ward	June 2002
New renal dialysis unit	June 2002
New diabetes/dermatology centre	April 2003
Additional outpatient services	1997-present
Investigation unit for medicine	2001–02
Discharge lounge (to be relocated April 2004)	2001–02
Additional bed in coronary care	1997
Two additional beds in intensive care	2001–02
Additional endoscopy session, including the provision of nurse endoscopy	2001-present

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been treated in the Renal Centre at Chorley hospital since it opened; and if he will make a statement on the effects on local people of using the centre. [161589]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not held centrally.

The new unit has eased access to dialysis treatment and has also added significant capacity to the service provided by Lancashire Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Trust.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many women with suspected breast cancer saw a specialist within two weeks in each year since 2000. [161591]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The two week outpatient waiting time standard was introduced in April 1999 for urgent general practitioner referrals of suspected breast cancer. The following shows the number of women seen within two weeks for each year since 2000.

	Number of women seen by a specialist within two weeks of urgent referral
2000	84,989
2001	97,254
2002	109,339
2003	119,888

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many constituents in Chorley over 60 years of age *(a)* benefited from free eye tests and *(b)* were eligible for free eye tests in 2003. [161590]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not available.

The total number of sight tests paid for by Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority in the year 2002–03 for the 'aged 60 and over' category was 189,000. Sight tests can not be equated to the numbers of patients. Although most people do not come back for a sight test within the year, some patients suffering from medical conditions are advised to have re-examinations sooner.

The total population for those aged 60 and over in Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority is approximately 429,300 (as at June 2002). All people aged 60 and over are eligible for national health service sight tests.

Immigrant Medical Inspections

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what bodies have responsibility for inspection and scrutiny of the medical inspection of immigrants function. [156851]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The lead body on the inspection and scrutiny of healthcare provided by the National Health Service, including that of medical inspection of immigrants, is the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection (CHAI).

Infant Formula

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what representations his Department has received regarding the ingredients used in infant formula; [161343]

(2) what representations his Department has received in the last 12 months about breaches of infant formula and follow-on formula regulations. [161344]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* In May 2003, the former European Scientific Committee on Food published its report on the revision of essential requirements of infant formulae and follow-on formulae. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) received detailed comments on that report from members of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition; from Baby Milk Action and from the Infant and Dietetic Foods Association.

In the last 12 months, the FSA has received two letters on the subject of breaches of The Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations 1995 (as amended).

Medical Students

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of medical students failed to graduate or complete their courses in each year since 1990. [161026]

Mr. Hutton: Collection of data on students is a matter for the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA). HESA collects data on the drop out rate of first degree students by institution, but not by subject.

Mersey Regional Ambulance Service

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information his Department collects on the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service. [159833]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* The Department collects information about volume of service and performance against required standards; details of the returns are in the statistical bulletin "Ambulance Service, England: 2002–03". A copy is available in the Library and also on the internet at www.publications.doh.gov.uk/public/sb0313.htm.

The Department also collects ambulance expenditure returns. The purpose of the returns is to identify total expenditure incurred in the running of ambulance services, and to analyse the breakdown between emergency, non emergency and costs.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps have been taken to monitor the performance of Mersey Regional Ambulance Service since 26 November 2003; [159834]

(2) what discussions his officials have had with *(a)* the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service and *(b)* Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority about improving the performance of the ambulance service since 26 November 2003. [159835]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* Departmental officials have held discussions with the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority (SHA), as part of a regular review of performance across a full range of issues. The responsibility for performance management of national health service trusts lies with the SHAs.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many calls Mersey Regional Ambulance Service *(a)* failed to answer within two minutes and *(b)* took more than five minutes to answer in each month since October 2003. [159836]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* This information is not collected centrally.

National Service Framework for Older People

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he plans to set further milestones for the National Service Framework for Older People; and if he will make a statement. [161930]

Dr. Ladyman: There are no current plans to set further milestones for the National Service Framework for older people.

NHS Funding (Manchester)

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much additional money will be allocated to *(a)* South Manchester Primary Care Trust and *(b)* Central Manchester Primary Care Trust as a result of the amendments to the census figures for the City of Manchester. [161472]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* Revenue allocations for the provision of healthcare, made to primary care trusts (PCTs) for 2003–04 to 2005–06 were announced on 11 December 2002. There are no plans to revisit these allocations.

Any changes in PCTs' population figures will be taken into account for the next round of allocations. Preparatory work for the next allocations round, covering the period up to 2007–08, will commence shortly.

Prescriptions

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the potential for fraud in the use of electronic transmission of prescriptions. [159107]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Three pilot projects on the electronic transmission of prescriptions (ETP) ran from mid-2002 to mid-2003 and were independently evaluated by the Sowerby Centre for Health Informatics at the University of Newcastle. An essential part of this was a full security analysis to assess potential risks and threats, including fraud, and ensuring appropriate countermeasures were put in place.

ETP is now being taken forward as part of the national programme for information technology. The lessons learned on fraud prevention from the earlier pilots are being incorporated into the design of the national model for ETP.

The NHS Counter Fraud and Security Management Service (CFSMS) is fully involved in the development of the ETP project and will continue to work to ensure that opportunities for fraud are minimised.

Primary Care Funding

Mr. Watts: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how long he expects it to take fully to implement the new funding system for primary care trusts. [158183]

Mr. Hutton *[pursuant to his reply, 4 March 2004, Official Report, c. 1117W]:* I regret my previous response was incorrect. The second paragraph of the response should have read as follows.

"The new formula was used to set PCT target allocations for the latest round of national health service revenue allocations, covering the period 2003–06."

Radon Gas

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many deaths were attributable to radon gas exposure in each of the last five years. [160426]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* From the known radiation risks, the National Radiological Protection Board has calculated that exposure to radon gas in the home and work place causes approximately 2,500 lung cancer deaths per year in the United Kingdom.

Smoking

Mr. Stevenson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps he is taking to minimise adverse effects of second hand smoking on the respiratory health of children; [159473]

(2) what information is available to new parents about the implications of second hand smoke for the respiratory health of children; [159474]

(3) what assessment he has made of the effect of second hand smoke on the respiratory health of babies and young children; and if he will make a statement; [159475]

(4) how many children under the age of five are being treated for respiratory conditions; and what estimate he has made of the proportion of these children who live in households with at least one smoker; [159476]

(5) what measures he is taking to inform parents of the implications of secondhand smoking for the respiratory health of babies and young children. [159477]

Miss Melanie Johnson: It is estimated that, each year, more than 17,000 children under five years are admitted to United Kingdom hospitals because of respiratory illness caused by the exposure to other people's cigarette smoke.

The Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health (SCOTH) Report published in 1998 reported that:

"passive smoking is a cause of lung cancer and childhood respiratory disease.

There is also evidence that passive smoking is a cause of ischaemic heart disease and cot death, middle ear disease and asthmatic attacks in children. Parents need to be informed about the effects of passive smoking on their children".

The World Health Organisation has found that children are especially vulnerable to secondhand smoke. This is because their lungs are smaller and their immune systems less developed, rendering them more susceptible to respiratory and ear infections triggered by passive smoking; children are smaller and breathe faster than adults and so take in more harmful chemicals per kg of weight than adults; and children often have less choice than adults to leave a smoke-filled room.

The Department has taken action to increase the public's awareness of the dangers from secondhand smoke. The "smoking kids" television advertisement launched last summer was this country's first ever-substantial campaign on secondhand smoke. This has been followed up by major billboard and press adverts. Focusing on children, the television advertisement says:

"Every year thousands of children have to go into hospital because of breathing other people's cigarette smoke".

This goes hand in hand with some of the new health warnings on cigarette packs, which highlight the dangers of secondhand smoke, including the specific advice, "protect children—don't let them breath your smoke".

Evaluation results show that awareness of the messages had been raised. Spontaneous awareness of advertising or publicity of smoking around children rose from 30 per cent. at the pre stage to 74 per cent. at the post stage. Furthermore; there was 78 per cent. spontaneous awareness in households where there were children and at least one of the parents smoked. 55 per cent. of respondents were able to spontaneously recall an element from the campaign, with 49 per cent. of respondents recalling the image of smoke coming from the children's mouths or noses. Prompted recognition of the television advertisement was 79 per cent. The advertising had significant impact amongst non-smokers, with 69 per cent. at the post stage agreeing that the advertisements made them feel that they should encourage their partners and friends that they should not smoke around children.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to reduce the level of smoking in children under the age of 16. [160074]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The White Paper, Smoking Kills, published in December 1998, committed the Government to reduce smoking amongst children aged 11–15 from 13 per cent. to 11 per cent. by 2005, and 9 per cent. by 2010. The latest figures, for 2002, show smoking among 11–15 year olds had fallen to 10 per cent. We

have a comprehensive tobacco control strategy, which includes a number of measures likely to make a particular impact on children smoking:

The Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002 provided for a comprehensive ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products: the cigarettes smoked most by children are also those which were most heavily advertised.

Tough enforcement on under-age sales: in September 2000 the Government launched an Enforcement Protocol with local authorities to ensure that the existing legislation on under-age sales is properly enforced.

The Government supports roof of age card schemes, hich protect shopkeepers and children alike.

Tougher new restrictions on siting of cigarette vending machines have been introduced.

The national healthy school standard aims to support schools in the process of becoming healthier and is jointly funded by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health and hosted by the Health Development Agency. The overall aim is to help schools become healthy and effective learning environments and is part of the Government's drive to reduce health inequalities, promote social inclusion and raise educational standards through school improvement. Themes include personal, social and health education, including among others, tobacco.

Maintaining the high price of cigarettes is a particular deterrent for children.

Stress Incontinence

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what percentage of women suffer from continence problems as a direct result of childbirth; and if he will make a statement. [161240]

Dr. Ladyman: Figures on the number of women who suffer from continence problems as a direct result of childbirth are not collected centrally.

Sunsmart Campaign

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps his Department will take to support the Sunsmart campaign organised by Cancer Research UK; [160998]

(2) what steps his Department will take to increase public awareness of high factor suncreams; [160999]

(3) if he will take steps to subsidise the cost of high factor suncream. [161000]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Decisions on the future funding of the Cancer Research UK's SunSmart sun awareness campaign will be taken in due course.

We have no plans to subsidise the cost of high factor suncream. Research evidence supports our view and that of key stakeholders that shade and clothing (including eyewear) are safer and more reliable means of protecting people against the harmful effects of ultra violet (UV) rays. The Cancer Research UK's SunSmart campaign reinforces this message by saying that sunscreen is one element in the SunSmart campaign's advice on protection against the risk of skin cancer, and should be used if seeking shade (especially between 11.00 and 15.00) and covering skin with clothing is not possible. If sunscreen is used, it should be factor 15 or above and should be regularly applied. In practice, only minimal additional benefit is gained by using factors higher than 15. A Sun Protection Factor 15 sunscreen blocks more than 92 per cent, of the UVB rays.

Sun awareness information is available from the SunSmart campaign at www.sunsmart.org.uk and from the Department SunSafe web pages at www.doh.gov.uk/sunsafe, where specific advice is provided on the use of sunscreens.

Working Time Directive

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his Answer of 11 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1548W, on the Working Time Directive, if he will list the concerns which have been raised over the implementation of the Directive in the context of NHS compliance for doctors in training from 1 August. [156352]

Mr. Hutton: Representations received have covered both the ways in which compliance with the Directive can be achieved, as well as the problems caused to the National Health Service by the decisions of the European Court of Justice on the SIMAP/Jaeser cases.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 4 March, *Official Report*, col. 1119W, on the Working Time Directive, how he will *(a)* monitor compliance with the Working Time Directive and *(b)* prepare for its implementation. [160701]

Mr. Hutton: The Working Time Regulations are a legal requirement; implementation and monitoring of compliance is being taken forward locally.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 18 March 2004

DEFENCE

Arctic Campaign Veterans

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will ensure that the Arctic campaign veterans, who do not qualify for the Atlantic Star due to length of service restrictions receive some recognition of their service. [162158]

Mr. Caplin: All armed forces personnel who completed 28 days' operational service were eligible to receive the War Medal 1939–45. This included service on the convoys to Northern Russia. Any service curtailed by death, injury or capture also qualified for the award. There will always be those who fail to meet the qualifying period for a campaign medal for some reason or another. This does not signify that their service is not appreciated nor justify the institution of an alternative award.

AWE Aldermaston

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what initiatives have been taken by AWE Aldermaston to diversify out of nuclear warhead research, development and production. [161756]

Mr. Ingram: AWE plc maintains a regular dialogue with industry and academia to encourage, within security constraints, beneficial exchanges and collaboration aimed at optimising its ability to meet its core mission of nuclear warhead research, development, production, in-service support and disposal. AWE plc's expertise in nuclear weapons inevitably has wider application; and the performance of core work can result in spin-off technology that has utility in industry and society at large. Beyond this, it is not AWE plc's function within its contract with the MOD to diversify out of the core business it is required to undertake.

Correspondence

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 11 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1460–61W, on Sea King helicopters, when he will write in reply to the hon. Member for St. Ives. [162219]

Mr. Ingram: It has taken some time to collate the detailed information requested by the hon. Member. The work is now complete and I will write to him shortly and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Drugs

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of each of the armed forces tested positive for the use of controlled substances in the calendar year 2003 *(a)* as a proportion of those tested and *(b)* broken down by substance. [161305]

Mr. Caplin: The number of personnel who tested positive for use of a controlled substance in the year 2003 expressed as a proportion of those tested, and number of substances detected is as follows (the number of drugs identified is greater than the number of individuals who test positive where an individual tests positive for more than one drug):

The Naval Service

	Number
Number tested	13,803
Number positive	56
Percentage positive	0.41
Substance detected:	
Heroin	1
Cocaine	23
Ecstasy	15
Cannabis	23
Amphetamine	4
Total	66

Army

	Number
Number tested	93,168
Number positive	516
Percentage positive	0.62
Substance detected:	
Heroin	4
Cannabis	288
Ecstasy	117
Cocaine	126
Amphetamines	41
Others	4
Total	580

RAF

	Number
Number tested	12,432
Number positive	20
Percentage positive	0.16
Substance detected:	
Ecstasy	4
Cannabis	16
Total	20

Submarine Crew

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when the policy of instructing submarine crews to share rollneck jumpers and foul-weather suits was initiated by staff in his Department; and for what reasons; [161827]

(2) what estimate he has made of the effect on *(a)* operational efficiency and *(b)* morale of instructing submarine crews to share rollneck jumpers and foul-weather suits; [161829]

(3) what the estimated savings are per submarine per month of the policy of sharing rollneck jumpers and foul-weather suits; [161828]

(4) if he will list those submarines in which crew members have been instructed to share *(a)* rollneck jumpers and *(b)* foul-weather suits. [161826]

Mr. Ingram: There is no policy that submarine crews are to share rollneck jumpers and there has been no reduction in the allocation of foul-weather clothing suits. On the contrary, a programme is in place to increase the number of sets of foul-weather clothing suits issued.

We have not estimated the savings that might accrue from adopting a policy of sharing personal clothing.

Websites

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total annual cost of his Department's websites, including those of its agencies, was in the most recent year for which figures are available. [159513]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence and armed forces collectively maintain four corporate websites. Direct expenditure on these in the financial year 2003–04 was as follows:

Organisation	*Address*	*Expenditure (£)*
Ministry of Defence	www.mod.uk	111,000
Royal Navy	www.roval-navy.mod.uk	230,000
British Army	www.army.mod.uk	160,000
Royal Air Force	www.raf.mod.uk	108,000
Total		609,000

A number of other, generally small, websites are maintained by subsidiary organisations of the MOD and armed forces. However, information on their expenditure is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Single European Currency (Referendum) Bill

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Leader of the House if he will propose the creation of a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament to examine the draft Single European Currency (Referendum) Bill. [160765]

Mr. Hain: No.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Defence Grant

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) how much grant allocation for the civil defence grant he retained in each financial year since 1997; [161377]

(2) if he will list the *(a)* location and *(b)* nature of successful project bids for the discretionary grant allocation of the civil defence grant for each financial year since 1997. [161376]

Mr. Alexander: Since 2002–03, £100,000 has been retained at the start of the financial year specifically to be allocated as Discretionary Grant to support special projects and events related to the local authority emergency planning functions that are of benefit to the wider emergency planning community.

2002–03	
Staffordshire and Derbyshire	Project to investigate and make recommendations for the implementation of quality control processes in the work of Emergency Planning Units.
Derbyshire	Seminar to promote public safety and good practice in the management of events and production of good practice guide.
Greater Manchester	Production of two training videos to assist with emergency planning awareness training .
Merseyside	Seminar to examine the lessons learned for emergency planning from the September 11 terrorist attack.
Tyne and Wear, Northumberland, Cleveland, County Durham and Darlington	Project to examine and identify improved methods of collaborative working within Regions.
Tyne and Wear	Project (PhD) to research GIS system to provide methodology for hazard analysis and risk assessment.
Swindon and Wiltshire	Project to provide virtual reality databases for high risk sites for use during training and live incidents.
Coventry	Production of revised and updated guidance document 'Guidelines For Faith Communities When Dealing With Disasters'.
All local authorities in Wales	Project to further development of 'Wales Benchmarking Club' (performance indicators for emergency planning).
Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	Project to develop mutual aid scheme.

2003–04	
Reading	Production of a resilience information booklet for schools and libraries, supported by a 'Z-Card' for public distribution.
London (Fire and Emergency Planning Authority)	Project to devise a strategy for the uniform provision of Business Continuity Management (BCM) promotion in London's 33 local authorities.
Gloucestershire	BCM training package for local authority services and other public sector bodies.
Tyne and Wear	Seminar/workshop to explore and identify suitable methods of BCM promotion by local authorities, and to explore the role of partners in the process.
Norfolk	Electronic (E-Tool) emergency management information project for the public and emergency responders.
Shropshire	Production of a multi-lingual phrase book for the victims of a CBRN incident
Association of Greater Manchester Authorities	Study to identify research related to human behaviour and its impact on the emergency response and business continuity management.

2003–04	
Bradford	The employment of a faith groups' liaison officer to complement other community cohesion initiatives which relate to local resilience and major incident planning.
Bradford	To further develop population modelling work and risk data sources for the identification of vulnerable population sites.

Civil Service Training

Harry Cohen: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what information he collects on the percentage of annual staffing costs spent on training in the civil service. [162086]

Mr. Alexander: The bulk of training in the civil service is carried out at Departmental level and information on costs incurred is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Lord Birt

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on the present work programme of Lord Birt. [162371]

Mr. Alexander: The position remains as set out in the answer provided by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for North Norfolk (Norman Lamb) on 11 March 2003, *Official Report*, column 214W.

Websites

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will instruct the office to maintain centrally expenditure figures for all Government Department websites. [159521]

Mr. Alexander: Individual Government Departments are responsible for the management and content of their websites and as such information regarding expenditure is not held centrally. There are no plans to hold such information centrally at the Cabinet Office.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sugar

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the impact on developing countries of each of the options for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy sugar regime set out in the European Commission's working paper Reforming the European Union's sugar policy. [161504]

Hilary Benn: The UK Government support the European Commission's view that the extension of the current regime beyond 2006 (the 'status quo' option) is unsustainable given a range of both internal and external pressures. However, the issues are complex in developmental terms as any change to such a highly distorted regime will bring about losers as well as winners. This complexity is amplified by the divergence of interests among those developing countries with and those without preferential access to the European Union sugar market. DFID is working closely with other Government Departments to examine the implications for developing countries of the three options for reform set out by the European Commission.

West African Refugees

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the aid given to UNHCR to assist in the care and resettlement of West African refugees, with particular reference to those in Guinea; and what recent sums have been allocated. [161947]

Hilary Benn: DFID has recently committed £1.5 million to programmes of assistance to refugees in Guinea. In response to the UN's Consolidated Appeal for Guinea for 2004, we have provided £500,000 to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for care and assistance of Liberian refugees, and £500,000 to UNICEF for a primary health care project aimed at refugees and other vulnerable populations. In addition, we have contributed £500,000 to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) 2004 Appeal for assistance to vulnerable populations, including refugees, in Guinea.

PRIME MINISTER

Sir David King

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister whether Sir David King currently has to secure approval for media statements he wishes to make. [162372]

The Prime Minister: No.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Katharine Gun

19. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Solicitor-General if she will make a statement on evidential deficiency in the Katharine Gun case. [162136]

The Solicitor-General: The decision to offer no further evidence against Katharine Gun was made by the Crown Prosecution Service as an independent prosecuting authority. It was made solely on legal grounds and in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

There was, in the Gun case, a clear prima facie breach of section 1 of the Official Secrets Act 1989. However, senior treasury counsel advised that there was no longer a realistic prospect of convicting Ms Gun. The Director of Public Prosecutions agreed. The evidential deficiency arose from the prosecution's inability, within the current statutory framework, to disprove the defence of necessity in this case.

Rape

22. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Solicitor-General what assessment she has made of the effects of the new test of reasonableness introduced into the law of consent on the number of convictions of those guilty of rape. [162140]

The Solicitor-General: The Government introduced the Sexual Offences Act 2003, as one of a number of steps to improve the conviction rate for rape. Under the new Act, the test will be whether a person has a reasonable belief that the victim consented taking into account all the circumstances, including any steps he took to ascertain whether the victim consented. The Government believe that this will have an impact on rape trials because the defendant must be certain that there is consent to the sexual activity at the time in question.

We expect the Act will to come into force in May.

Fraud

24. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Solicitor-General what further plans she has to assist small businesses in combating fraud. [162142]

The Solicitor-General: The Serious Fraud Office will be addressing the Federation of Small Businesses at their conference in Blackpool on 19 March on the subject of 'Preventing fraud in your business'.

TRANSPORT

Bus Interchange (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much Government grant went to the new bus interchange at Chorley; and what percentage of the cost this represented. [161531]

Mr. McNulty: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer of 4 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1131W.

Car Ownership

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of the UK population *(a)* owned a car 20 years ago and *(b)* own a car today. [162039]

Mr. Jamieson: Surveys show the proportion of households in GB owning one or more cars rising from 60 per cent. in 1981 to 74 per cent. of all households in 2001, the latest year for which this information is published.

This corresponds to 27 cars per hundred people in 1981 and 42 cars per hundred people in 2001.

Crossrail

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to publish the Montague Report on Crossrail. [162075]

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on the Crossrail project; [162442]

(2) how much public money will be spent on the Crossrail project; [162448]

(3) what plans there are for the cost of tickets on Crossrail services; [162456]

(4) what the total cost of the Crossrail project is expected to be. [162464]

Mr. McNulty: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport, is currently considering Adrian Montague's detailed advice on Crossrail and will publish his findings in due course.

Cycle Helmets

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effect on numbers of cycle journeys should cycle helmets be made compulsory. [159106]

Mr. Jamieson: My Department commissioned research on the effectiveness of cycle helmets, including the relative risk of injury to cyclists with and without helmets, by way of a literature review, and this was published in November 2002 (Road Safety Research Report No. 30), a copy of which was placed in the Library. The conclusion from the review was that helmets have been found to be effective at reducing the incidence and severity of head, brain and upper facial injury, particularly for children. The report also concludes that there is evidence that compulsory helmet wearing may discourage some bicyclists leading to decreased bicycle use.

In addition to the periodic monitoring we carry out of the wearing rates for cycling helmets, we plan to initiate further research to explore the possible relationship between cycling casualties and cycling levels.

Heathrow

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the review of operations at Heathrow to establish the practicality and impact of mixed mode operation will include a review of existing noise preferential departure routes. [161368]

Mr. McNulty: The further work announced in "The Future Development of Air Transport White Paper", which includes consideration of how to make the most of Heathrow's existing two runways, may involve review of some existing noise preferential departure routes, but the extent to which this may be necessary will only become clear as the work proceeds. Noise preferential routes may in future need to be reviewed in any event in the light of the "Single Sky" proposals. Any changes which might have a significant effect on the level or distribution of noise and emissions would require prior consultation.

High-speed Rail Lines

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans the Government has for new high speed rail lines. [162469]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Members for Pendle (Mr. Prentice) and for Luton, North (Mr. Hopkins) on 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1407–08W.

Motorised Scooters

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* deaths and *(b)* injuries have been recorded as a result of accidents involving motorised scooters in 2003. [162007]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is not available.

Network Rail

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for the future of Network Rail. [162461]

Mr. McNulty: Network Rail is a private company and, subject to its regulatory regime, its future activities are a matter for the company to determine rather than my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) for how long the Government expect to continue subsidising Network Rail; [162462]

(2) what Government subsidies are given to rail operators, other than those which are given to Network Rail. [162463]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority provides financial support for passenger and freight operating companies as well as to Network Rail, The Department for Transport also makes grant payments to London and Continental Railways Ltd. in respect of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. Full details of this support is set out in the SRA's Annual Report and in National Rail Trends. Copies of these publications are in the Library of the House.

Forecast future Government support for the rail industry is set out in the progress report on the "Transport 10 Year Plan" which was published by the Department in December 2002. These forecasts are being reviewed and updated as part of the 2004 spending review.

Powered Two-wheelers

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many powered two-wheeler users involved in accidents were *(a)* killed and *(b)* seriously injured during 2003; and if he will make a statement. [161671]

Mr. Jamieson: The figures for 2003 are not yet available. In 2002, 609 Two-Wheeled Motor Vehicle users were killed and 6,891 seriously injured. These statistics have been published in "Road Casualties Great Britain 2002—Annual Report", a copy of which has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many *(a)* solely state-financed and *(b)* public-private partnership and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible have been launched in each region in each of the last 10 years; [160965]

(2) how much was spent by *(a)* the Government on solely state-financed projects and *(b)* the (i) Government and (ii) private sector on public-private and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible in each of the last 10 years, broken down by region. [160966]

Mr. McNulty: An analysis of transport spending (including current spending) is published in Chapter 8 of Public Expenditure and Statistical Analysis (PESA) 2003 on the Treasury website: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media//C6E3A7pesa_03_indexed.pdf.

In respect of road projects, I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Newport, West (Paul Flynn) on 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1640W. Information on other government supported transport projects broken down by region over the last 10 years is not held centrally by the Department.

In respect of private finance initiative projects, a list of signed projects is available on the Treasury website: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public_private_partnerships/ppp_pfi_stats.cfm.

This can be searched by Department and region.

Public Transport

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what publicity campaigns his Department has planned to encourage more people to use public transport. [162038]

Mr. McNulty: Publicity campaigns to encourage use of public transport are generally taken forward by individual transport operators. The Department has focused on the provision of better transport information and in increasing consumer choice in our publicity campaigns. We have promoted "traveline", a public information number giving route and timetable information for journeys by bus, coach, train, tram, ferry and metro and will shortly be launching and promoting "Transport Direct" an interactive journey planner covering all major forms of transport.

Last September, the Department, together with the Department for Education, also announced a school travel campaign aimed at tackling congestion around the school run. This involves substantial funding to allow local authorities to recruit school travel advisers and publication of an 'Action Plan' to help schools promote safe and healthy travel to school. In addition, we have also worked with consumer and lifestyle press to stimulate publicity on school travel, encouraging alternatives to the use of the car.

Railways

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list the stations at which selective door opening is permitted *(a)* under grandfather rights and *(b)* since privatisation; [161528]

(2) for what reasons stations at which selective door opening is permitted under grandfather rights for certain types of rolling stock cannot be extended to other rolling stock fitted with a suitable door control mechanism; [161529]

(3) for what reasons new trains fitted with selective door opening systems are only permitted to use these if the driver cabs are fitted with GPS. [161530]

(4) for what reasons train drivers are required to use GPS in addition to visual checks to establish their location on station platforms. [161773]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority is preparing a list of stations where selective door opening is permitted, a copy of which will be placed in the House Library shortly. All cases of selective door opening have been introduced since privatisation.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advise that rolling stock fitted with selective door opening is permitted to stop at stations with short platforms, provided the train operator sets out how the risks associated with selective door opening usage will be managed.

The HSE does not require that train operators using selective door opening make use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS). However, I understand that, on there own initiative, South Central Trains and South East Trains are currently using GPS technology in automatic selective door opening pilot trials.

Road Accidents (Lincolnshire)

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* deaths and *(b)* serious injuries there were in road traffic accidents in (i) North East Lincolnshire, (ii) North Lincolnshire and (iii) Lincolnshire in each year since 1997. [162580]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is in the following table.

Casualties from road accidents: 1997–2002

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
North East Lincolnshire						
Killed	8	7	9	11	5	1
Seriously injured	127	136	116	113	132	120
North Lincolnshire						
Killed	26	18	14	9	22	9
Seriously injured	134	149	109	120	156	123
Lincolnshire						
Killed	77	83	104	71	84	91
Seriously injured	678	701	662	520	530	645

Speed/Safety Camera Partnerships

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will require Safety Camera Partnerships to release funding for local road safety projects, with particular reference to the police-led BikeSafe initiative; and if he will make a statement. [161656]

Mr. Jamieson: Receipts from speed camera fines in areas participating in the safety camera cost recovery scheme may be used only on the installation and operation of approved safety camera installations. BikeSafe is not exclusively a speed or safety camera related issue and therefore falls outside the remit of the cost recovery scheme. The rules of the scheme are kept under review.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his oral answer of 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 615 and the answer of 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 993W, on speed cameras, if he will make a statement on the use that has been made of the revenue from speed cameras in Southend. [160795]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 12 March 2004]:* Receipts from speed camera fines in areas participating in the safety camera cost recovery scheme may be used only on the installation and operation of approved safety camera installations.

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of fees from speed cameras in Suffolk was reinvested in road safety measures in each of the last five years. [161229]

Mr. Jamieson: Suffolk has been participating in the safety camera cost recovery scheme since April 2003. Receipts from safety camera fines resulting in areas participating in the scheme may be used only for the installation and operation of approved safety camera installations, with other investment in road safety measures being funded within local authorities and national road programmes. Fine receipts beyond the costs of safety camera installations are passed to the Consolidated Fund. Before Suffolk joined the cost recovery scheme in April 2003, all fine revenue from camera activity was passed to the Consolidated Fund.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Carers Grant

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were receiving funding from the Carers Grant *(a)* in England and *(b)* broken down by local authority in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [161929]

Dr. Ladyman: I have been asked to reply.

The Carers Grant, which was introduced in 1999–2000, gives money to local councils to support them in providing short breaks for carers. Data are not available for the first year of the grant. Figures for 2000–01, 2001–02, and 2002–03 have been placed in the Library.

Departmental Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many cases of computer misuse there were in his Department *(a)* in 1997 and *(b)* since 2002–03, broken down by each category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [162395]

Mr. Browne: The Department treats very seriously any suspicion of misuse of computer systems by staff and takes firm action in any cases that arise. All such cases, if proven, result in disciplinary action being taken against the offender leading to either a disciplinary penalty or dismissal.

Data relating to 1997 could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Tables provided as follows detail the number of cases formally investigated and proven by category for 2002–03 and 2003–04. All these cases have resulted in, or are in the process of having disciplinary action taken.

Computer misuse 2002–03

Category	*Number*
Unauthorised access to computer systems	29
Use of unauthorised software	3
Manipulation of computer systems	2

Computer misuse 2003–04

Category	*Number*
Unauthorised access to computer systems	31
Use of unauthorised software	8
Manipulation of computer systems	0

The figures provided for 2003–04 cover the year to date and represent proven cases. Several investigations are ongoing, but have not been included, as the results are not known yet.

Excludes minor cases handled locally.

Departmental Sickness Absence

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress he has made on reducing his Department's sickness absence rate; what baseline figure was used to assess his Department's compliance with its Public Service Agreement target on reducing sickness rates; what the rate was in each of the last seven years; and if he will make a statement. [162388]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions has a Service Delivery Agreement for reducing sickness absence. This is nine days over the year to December 2004 and 8.5 days over the year to December 2005, as interim targets towards the key indicator of eight days to 2006. The Department is committed to increasing its level of attendance to meet this challenge.

To secure improvements the Department has launched a managing attendance strategy that combines a policy drawn from recognised best practice, with initiatives targeting specific areas. The initiatives include the following:

a scrutiny of long-term absence cases to draw out any lessons that can be learned from these cases and for the necessary action to be followed through;

pilots in five Jobcentre Plus districts focusing on early intervention by Occupational Health nurses to help avoid absences becoming long term;

Well Being at Work pilots which aim to contribute to the well being of the organisation by identifying and tackling stress (as part of a wider Health and Safety Executive pilot);

an evaluation of the Attendance Management policy. This will complement the National Audit Office study that is currently taking place of the Department's Attendance Management policy.

The information requested on the Department's sickness absence rate is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is in the table.

Sickness absence information for DWP and the former DSS

Department	*Year*	*Average number of working days lost*
DSS	1999–2000	12.0
DSS	2000–01	12.3
DSS	2001–02	11.2
DWP	2002–03	12.3

Notes:

1. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was created in June 2001. Due to the migration of businesses into and out of the newly forming Department, and differences in calculation methods, figures for the Department as a whole are only available from April 2002.

2. The information in Table 1 covers the years April 1999 to March 2002 relating to the former Department of Social Security (DSS), the main predecessor Department in place prior to the formation of DWP, and for DWP for April 2002 to March 2003.

3. Figures have been provided for DSS and DWP for each full operational year since 1999. Sickness absence information for the current year, April 2003 to March 2004, will be available in spring 2004.

IT Contracts

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list information technology contracts in his Department with a value of above £20 million in each of the last 10 years; what the inception date for each system was; when it became fully functional; when it became fully debugged; and what the cost of over-runs has been. [146196]

Mr. Browne: This question covers periods prior to the establishment in June 2001 of the Department for Work and Pensions, formed from the Employment Service (ES) and the Department for Social Security (DSS).

This information relates to contractual arrangements made by the Department for Work and Pensions, as well as the former ES and DSS.

On the question of de-bugging, the view is that no system is completely free of "bugs". However, the Department deals with these according to priority, working in partnership with private sector providers to eradicate on an on-going basis.

Contracts identified in relation to this question

Contract	*Description*	*Inception date*	*Date fully functional*	*Cost over-runs*
IT Partnership Agreement	Employment Service outsourced its IT work through a partnership agreement with Electronic Data Systems (EDS) This agreement was revised to reflect major new investment in IT and telephony to improve services for jobless people and employers in the Modernising Employment Service (MES) Project. This project was further revised from August 2003, and re-named Digital Office Infrastructure Completion—DOI(C), bringing former ES staff a desktop PC consistent with the rest of the DWP estate.	August 1998(original outsourcing) October 2000(MES) August 2003(DOI (C)	August 1998 DOI-C estimated to be complete by May 2004	None
ACCORD Strategic Outsourcing Business Allocation	The DSS awarded a contract to outsource its IT provision. This contract also encompasses business outsourced previously in 1995 under FOCUS 95 arrangements and is concerned with the maintenance, development and operation of the Department's existing IT systems.	August 2000	September 2000	None
Child Support Reforms	The DSS awarded the contract to provide new IT systems in support of the Child Support Agency. The system became functional on 27 January 2003, for new child support claims processed under old scheme rules. Processing claims under new rules began on March 2003. Further work is still required before the system will be fully functional. Within the terms of the PFI based contract, the primary responsibility for the quality of the computer service lies with EDS.They have pledged to bear the costs of completing their obligations and bringing the service to an agreed level. The Department is currently retaining around 15 per cent. of each monthly payment due to the service provider.	August 2000	Functional from January 2003	The amount DWP will pay is currently forecast to rise by 7 per cent. over the term of the contract.
New Tax Credits NTC	This contract is for the delivery of new and amended DWP IT to enable joint working with the Inland Revenue and their Tax Credits system and to reflect the changes in benefit rules resulting from the introduction of NTC.	December 2000	April 2003	None
Pensions Forecasting	This contract is for the delivery of a new pensions forecasting system, providing individuals with clear and accurate information about their retirement pension and raising awareness of the importance of making adequate provision for retirement.	June 2002	September 2004	Unable to identify any cost over- run at this stage as the project is not yet complete.
Pensions Credit Front End	This contract is for the delivery of a tele-application to support the processing—and administration—of claims to Pensions Credit.	April 2003	October 2003	None
Corporate Curam Licences	This contract relates to the use of a perpetual software licence and provision for support, initially for arrangements for the Customer Management System, but will be extended to other projects over time.	May 2003	N/A—this is a licensing contract.	None
Customer Management System Release 1	This contract represents a front-end information gathering system for working age customers. Support arrangements are to be provided under the Corporate Curam Licence contract.	December 2002	September 2003	None
Customer Management System Release 2	As above.	August 2003	This release is still under development.	Unable to identify any cost over-run at this stage as the project is not yet complete.
Digital Office Infrastructure (DOI) (formerly known as Early Office Infrastructure(EOI))	These are a series of contracts to replace the desktops and associated equipment for the Department's employees and eventually, the support arrangements for that kit		These are IT service contracts and not development. There have been a number of contract changes to build volumes and functionality.	Unable to identify any cost over-run at this stage as the project is not yet complete.
	(i) Mobilisation contract to build the infrastructure for the support;	January 2001		
	(ii) Roll out contracts to manage the implementation of the kit and associated equipment;	July 2001		
	(iii) Distribution, Implementation and Disposal Services.	July 2001		
FOCUS Lots B, C and D	These are outsourcing contracts let for the support and implementation of Office Services to SEMA Group UK Ltd (Lots B and C) and International Computers Ltd. (Lot D).	June 1995 Contracts transferred to Arcway in August 2000 under the ACCORD framework.	June 1995; these are IT service contracts.	None

Contracts identified in relation to this question

Contract	*Description*	*Inception date*	*Date fully functional*	*Cost over-runs*
Stand Alone Support Applications	This contract was let for the development, implementation, and support of the former DSS stand-alone support application systems.	August 1997	Development has been undertaken on a system-by- system basis, as and when required. Support arrangements are on-going for the duration of the contract.	None
Network and Office Service Provision—Wide Area Network	This contract has been let to replace the Wide Area Network across the former DSS estate. There have been a number of contract changes to meet additional requirements.	November 2000	Estimated to be June 2004.	Unable to identify any cost over-run at this stage as the project is not complete.
Advanced Telephony	This is a contract with BT plc for contact centre services, encompassing the provision, installation, support and maintenance of telephony and associated IT infrastructure.	March 2003	Some of the services are operational; others are in the implementation phase	None

A list of IT contracts current at the time of FOCUS 95 outsourcing has been placed in the Library. It is not possible to provide information prior to 1995, as this could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether it is his policy that a person who has been offered a job subject to Criminal Records Bureau checks is available for work for the purpose of Jobseeker's Allowance. [162213]

Mr. Pond: Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) provides financial support to jobseekers during periods of unemployment. The main conditions for receiving JSA therefore concentrate on the requirement to be actively seeking and available for work.

A customer who has been offered employment, and is awaiting the outcome of Criminal Records Bureau checks, must continue to satisfy these and other conditions of entitlement in order to receive JSA. Customers can however restrict their availability for the period in question by making themselves available for temporary work only, pending the result of the check.

Pensions

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what proportion of people in employment and aged between *(a)* 18 and 25, *(b)* 25 and 40, *(c)* 40 and 55 and *(d)* 55 and 65 are in active membership of an occupational pension scheme; [161207]

(2) what proportion of those aged between 18 and 65 in employment are in active membership of occupational pension schemes. [161228]

Malcolm Wicks: The information available is in the table.

Age	*Proportion currently contributing (percentage)*
(a) 18–25	19
(b) 25–40	51
(c) 40–55	60
(d) 55–65	45
All aged 18–65	49

Notes:

1. Those who are 'contributing' are members of a private occupational scheme.

2. All figures are estimates and are taken from the Family Resources Survey (FRS). 2002–03 is the latest year for which data are available. The coverage of the survey is GB.

3. Working age has been defined as 18–65.

Source:

Family Resources Survey 2002/03.

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of current member-nominated trustees of occupational pension schemes are *(a)* in receipt of pension benefits from that scheme, *(b)* managers employed by the company sponsoring the scheme and *(c)* trade union representatives. [161208]

Malcolm Wicks: According to the Employers' Pension Provision survey 2000, about 6 per cent. of pension scheme trustees are in receipt of a pension from the scheme. The remaining information is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of those aged between 18 and 65 in employment are in active membership of occupational pension schemes where the employer makes a contribution beyond that in respect of any national insurance rebates. [161227]

Malcolm Wicks: Information is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is given in Table 5.22 of Employers Pension Provision Survey 2000 (DWP Research Report No. 163), a copy of which is available in the Library.

CHURCH COMMISSIONER

Parish Priests

Miss McIntosh: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners pursuant to his answer of 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1633W, on parish priest salaries, how many parish priests were employed in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04. [162473]

Sir Stuart Bell: In 1997 there were 9,243 clergy in post in parishes. In 2002 the equivalent figure was 8,503. Figures for 2003 will be available shortly.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Chevening Scholarships

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Chevening scholarships were awarded in each of the last three years, broken down by country of origin of students. [161945]

Mr. Mullin: Numbers of Chevening scholarships awarded in the last three years have been: 2,285 in 2000–01, 2,284 in 2001–02, 2,390 in 2002–03. In each year the scholars were drawn from more than 150 countries, territories and regions. I will send the breakdown by country to the hon. Member, and I will place a copy in the Library of the House.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to enable students who are exiled from their own country to be able to bid for Chevening scholarships. [161946]

Mr. Mullin: While candidates for Chevening scholarships are normally required to apply in their countries of origin and to return there after completing their studies, we would not exclude applications from candidates who are outside their countries of origin. All applications are considered on their merits.

Colombia

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the Colombian Government fulfils its duty to provide secure working conditions for national and international human rights and humanitarian organisations in Colombia. [160001]

Mr. Rammell: We fully support the work of national and international NGOs and humanitarian organisations in Colombia. The London Declaration of July 2003 and Conclusions on Colombia at the most recent meeting of the European General Affairs and External Relations Council in January 2004 both highlight the vital role played by civil society in that country. We have also funded four human rights defender posts in areas of Colombia worst affected by the conflict. Their work is vital in ensuring that human rights and humanitarian organisations have secure working conditions. Our embassy in Bogota is in regular contact with the offices of the Vice-President and the Human Rights Ombudsman, and regularly raises with both of them specific cases of threats to, and harassment of, NGOs working in Colombia.

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the statement by the Colombian President, on the activities of the lawyers' collective, Jose Alvear Restrepo. [160002]

Mr. Rammell: The UK has highlighted the vital role of NGOs in Colombia on many occasions, including in the London Declaration of July 2003, and successive conclusions of the European General Affairs and External Relations Council. Such statements call on the Colombian Government to respect the work of civil society and to provide adequate protection and security for those working in such organisations. Regarding the Colectivo de Abogados Jose Alvear Restrepo (CDAJAR), we have great respect for the work of this organisation. The Deputy Head of Mission at our embassy in Bogota last called on them on 4 March 2004.

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter to him from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 19 January with regard to Mrs. M. Sam. [161806]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 16 February.

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will answer the letter to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Small Business and Enterprise from the hon. and learned Member for Harborough dated 4 August 2003 on behalf of Mr. G. Costello of Oadby, which was forwarded to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Trade by the Department of Trade and Industry on 5 August 2003. [162351]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: A reply has now been sent to the hon. and learned Member.

Guinea

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent surveys have been conducted into the refugee situation in Guinea; what conclusions he has drawn; and if he will make a statement. [161948]

Mr. Mullin: The UN Organisation for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Government of Guinea have recently carried out a survey of refugees around the Guinean/Ivorian border. The UN OCHA has recommended that the humanitarian agencies and Guinean Government produce a co-ordinated assessment of the entire refugee problem. The findings from this should inform a wider strategy for refugees and lead to the creation of a National Humanitarian Action Plan.

The UK has committed £1.5 million to Guinea through the Consolidated Appeal Process, split between the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, the United Nations Children Fund and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

International Law

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent steps the Law Officers have taken to secure the strengthening of international law relating to justifiable intervention in tyrannical regimes; and if he will make a statement. [162137]

Mr. Rammell: The Law Officers have taken no recent steps in this area, which is primarily the responsibility of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Under international law, force may be used provided that its use is in exercise of the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence as recognised in Article 51 of the UN Charter; or is authorised by the United Nations Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter; or—in exceptional circumstances—is the only way to avert an overwhelming humanitarian catastrophe.

The Government put forward proposals in 1999 to assist the Security Council in reaching decisions on when intervention is justified on humanitarian grounds. Although agreement was not reached in the Security Council at that time, we have continued to take an active part in an international debate on this issue and regularly discuss it with partners. There have been many other contributions to this debate, notably by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty in its report "The Responsibility to Protect".

In this context, we welcome the UN Secretary-General's decision to set up a High Level Panel to review how the UN can respond more effectively to threats to international peace and security, including considering whether any institutional changes are required.

Iraq

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of people employed by private security companies *(a)* on behalf of the coalition in Iraq and *(b)* by the United Kingdom in Iraq. [161989]

Mr. Rammell: Around 215 people are employed by private security companies on behalf of the Government in Iraq. We have not estimated the number of people employed by private security companies on behalf of the coalition as a whole in Iraq.

David Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the employment practices are of the veterinary directorate in Iraq; whether known opponents of the former regime are excluded for political reasons; and if he will make a statement. [162209]

Mr. Rammell: The employment practices of the Iraqi veterinary directorate in the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture are a matter for the Iraqi Minister of Agriculture.

We have used our influence, however, to ensure that there are safeguards in law for Iraqi employees. The Transitional Administrative Law agreed by the Iraqi Governing Council on 8 March 2004 enshrines the equality of all Iraqis and forbids discrimination on the basis of gender, nationality, religion or origin. It also establishes the right to form and join trade unions and the right to demonstrate and to strike peaceably. We are discussing with representatives from the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions how the Government can best help the growth of the Trades Union Movement in Iraq.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to maximise UN involvement in *(a)* the administration of Iraq and *(b)* the development of constitutional arrangements for an autonomous Kurdish region within an overall federal solution. [162191]

Mr. Rammell: United Nation's Security Council Resolutions 1483 and 1511 envisaged a major role for the UN in building a secure future for Iraq. In particular, they mandated the UN to co-ordinate humanitarian and reconstruction assistance and to work with the Coalition Provisional Authority and the people of Iraq in developing new representative systems of government. We strongly support the re-engagement of the UN in Iraq and stand ready with our coalition partners to provide security for UN personnel and premises. We believe the UN has a vital role to play in helping to forge a consensus among Iraqis on the best way to establish an Interim Government after 30 June 2004 and in preparing for elections in early 2005.

Federal issues are a matter for Iraqis to decide, including the degree of UN involvement. They will do so in the Transitional National Assembly to be elected in early 2005 and in a referendum on the draft constitution due later that year. The Transitional Administrative Law agreed by the Iraqi Governing Council on March 8 2004 recognises the administrative and legislative functions of the Kurdistan Regional Government. It also enshrines the principle that any federal system will not be based on ethnic or sectarian lines. But it leaves the final form of any federal structure to Iraqi democratic institutions to decide.

Kyrgyzstan

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs why there is no UK embassy in Kyrgyzstan; and if he will make a statement. [162393]

Mr. Rammell: We regret that financial constraints currently prevent the opening of an embassy in Kyrgyzstan. However, we still hope to appoint a locally-engaged member of staff from our embassy in Almaty, Kazakhstan, to the DfID office in Bishkek.

We have had to contend with competing demands across the Former Soviet Union where we have sought to expand operations in virtually all aspects of mission activity, including counter-narcotics co-operation, good governance, and aid. This increased activity has severely stretched our budgets.

In the meantime, we will continue to give our ambassador and his staff in Almaty all the help and support we can to complement the sterling efforts they are making.

TREASURY

Citizen Information Project

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) on what date the Citizen Information Project feasibility study was submitted to Ministers; when he expects the Office for National Statistics to publish the full text of the study; what the reason is for the delay in publication; and if he will make a statement; [162391]

(2) what form public consultation on the Citizen Information Project proposals will take; and on what timescale. [162392]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the General Registrar for England and Wales, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Oaten, dated 18 March 2004:

As Registrar General for England and Wales, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions on the Citizen Information Project (162391 and 162392),

A report on the Citizen Information Project feasibility study was presented to Ministers in June 2003. A full information note on the Citizen Information Project was published on 6 January 2004. A copy was placed in the Library of the House. At the same time I announced that Ministers had approved a 'project definition1 stage of development work. The project definition stage is now under way and I expect to report to Ministers in 2005 on whether or not this work should proceed to implementation.

Public consultation on the Citizen Information Project proposals is provisionally scheduled for the autumn of 2004. It will be conducted in line with Cabinet Office guidelines, as published by the Regulatory Impact Unit in January 2004.

Employment (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many new jobs have been created in Chorley since 1997. [161447]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle, dated 16 March 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about new jobs created in Chorley since 1997. (161447)

No information is explicitly available about numbers of new jobs created during this period.

However, statistics from surveys enable comparisons to be made of net changes, from year to year.

The attached table shows the number of jobs in Chorley Parliamentary Constituency (which covers the same area as Chorley Local Authority District) in each year from 1997 to 2002, the latest year for which information is available.

Number of jobs[1] in Chorley parliamentary constituency, 1997–2002

	Number
1997	30,400
1998	31,400
1999	31,900
2000	32,000
2001	37,500
2002	39,900
Change from 1997 to 2002	9,500

[1] Employee jobs only, not self-employed jobs.

Source:

1997: Annual Employment Survey, rescaled.

2002: Annual Business Inquiry (ABI).

Income Statistics

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many taxpayers there are with an income of less than *(a)* £5,000, *(b)* £10,000, *(c)* £15,000, *(d)* £20,000, *(e)* 23,000 and *(f)* £30,500. [161985]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my right hon. Friend to table 2.5 on the Inland Revenue website http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/income_tax/table-25.pdf.

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the average first-time earner's tax liability was in each of their first three years of paying income tax over the last five years. [161986]

(2) what the total income tax proceeds from first-time earners was in the last fiscal year for which figures are available. [161987]

Dawn Primarolo: I regret that the information requested is not available.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Access to Government (Code of Practice)

Llew Smith: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when his Department expects to publish the monitoring report on application of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information for 2003; and what plans he has to publicise the report on its publication. [161178]

Mr. Lammy: The Government hope to be in a position to publish the monitoring report for the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information for the year 2003 by August 2004.

As in previous years, the publication of the monitoring report will be publicised by way of an announcement in both Houses together with a press release and will be available in full on the Department for Constitutional Affairs' website.

Data Protection

Mr. Chope: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) if he will make it his policy to bring forward amendments to the Data Protection Act 1998 *(a)* to prevent the Information Commissioner from profiting from

the actions of bogus collectors and *(b)* to enable the Information Commissioner to take legal action against unauthorised collections; [159790]

(2) pursuant to his answers of 3 March 2004, references 157599 and 157589, how many of the successful legal actions were *(a)* civil and *(b)* criminal; how many were initiated by (i) the Office of Fair Trading, (ii) trading standards officers and (iii) the police; and in respect of each, what the penalties were; [159800]

(3) for what reasons it is not possible for the Commissioner to assess from documentation submitted through bogus agencies whether a notification is mandatory or voluntary; and if he will make it his policy that such ambiguous documentation is returned for clarification prior to registration. [159818]

Mr. Lammy: The Commissioner does not profit from the actions of bogus collectors. His office is funded by government grant. It is a requirement of the Data Protection Act 1998 that all fees and other sums received by him in the exercise of his functions under the Act shall be paid to the Secretary of State, who in turn is required to pay them into the Consolidated Fund.

There are no current plans to amend the 1998 Act to enable the Commissioner to take legal action against unauthorised collectors, but the matter will be kept under review. The prosecuting authority depends on the type of legal action pursued and can be the Office of Fair Trading, Local Trading Standards Department or the Police.

I understand that there have to date been five successful legal actions initiated against these companies: four civil and one criminal. In the civil actions, the Office of Fair Trading has obtained final injunctions against companies and individuals under the Control of Misleading Advertisements Regulations. It has also obtained written assurances (in lieu of court action) from 14 other individuals and companies that they would no longer be involved with the publication of misleading advertisements about data protection notification services. The criminal action involved a prosecution initiated by Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Service against a company and its director under section 14 of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968. Fines totalling £3,500 were imposed, plus £850 in prosecution costs.

Section 16 of the 1998 Act sets out the "registrable particulars" which must be included in a valid application for notification. The Commissioner's own application form asks data controllers to indicate whether they consider that they are exempt but have decided to notify voluntarily. As this question is not mandatory, the Commissioner would not and could not refuse to accept an application simply because the question had not been answered. The applications submitted by the agencies do not include this non-mandatory question.

Enforcement Agents

Andy King: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the fines officers working in the pilot enforcement programmes in *(a)* Cambridgeshire, *(b)* Cheshire, *(c)* Cumbria, *(d)* Devon and Cornwall, *(e)* Gloucester and *(f)* South Yorkshire implementing the Courts Act 2003 have been informed about the procedures covering vulnerable situations set out on page nine of the National Standards for Enforcement Agents issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department in April 2002. [161785]

Mr. Leslie: All Fines Officers in the local pilots areas have been recruited from existing staff, to whom the National Standards for Enforcement Agents was issued in May 2002. This guidance, together with general guidance ("Transfer of responsibility for warrant execution: Guidance notes", chapter 7 "Vulnerable people") issued by the then Lord Chancellor's Department in March 2001, will also be drawn to the attention of any new recruits—including fines officers, court clerks and enforcement agents, as part of their induction training. It is also included in follow-up training.

Legal Aid (Northern Ireland)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of the Department's legal aid budget has been spent in Northern Ireland in each of the past five years. [161891]

Mr. Leslie: There are separate budgets for legal aid in England and Wales (which is managed by the Department for Constitutional Affairs) and Northern Ireland (which is managed by the Northern Ireland Court Service). During the years 1998–99 to 2001–02 expenditure on legal aid was as follows.

£ million

	England and Wales	*Northern Ireland*
1998–99	1,684.0	32.7
1999–2000	1,616.5	37.3
2000–01	1,736.8	40.6
2001–02	1,788.5	44.8
2002–03	1,982.0	[1]48.5

[1] Subject to audit.

Northern Ireland Court Service

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many posts have been advertised by the Northern Ireland Court Service in the last five years; and how many were reserved, broken down by grade equivalent in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. [160334]

Mr. Leslie: Posts advertised in the last five years may be broken down as follows:

Number of posts	*NI Court Service grade*	*Equivalent NICS grade*	*Reserved/Non Reserved*
1999			
54	Level 4 Administrative Officer	Administrative Assistant/Officer	48 Reserved/6 Non reserved[1]
1	Level 2-Human Resource Unit	Deputy Principal	Reserved
7	Level 4-Customer Service Officer	Support Grade Band II	Reserved/Non Reserved[1]
3	Level 4 Tipstaff/ Court Crier	Support Grade Band I and II	Reserved
1	Level 4-Typist	Typist	Non Reserved

Number of posts	NI Court Service grade	Equivalent NICS grade	Reserved/Non Reserved
1	Level 2A-Accountant	Deputy Principal	Reserved
2000			
1	Level 4-Customer Services Officer	Support Grade Band 1-Telephonist	Non-Reserved
1	Level 4-Customer Services Officer (Amagh)	Support Grade Band II-Messenger	Non-Reserved
1	Director of Legal Aid	Grade 5 Senior Civil Service	Reserved
Total number of posts 3			
2001			
1	Level 4-Customer Services Officer	Support Grade Band 1-Telephonist	Non-Reserved
1	Level 2A-Accountant	Deputy Principle-Accountant	Reserved
1	Level 2B-Librarian	Staff Officer-Librarian	Reserved
3	Level 2A-Legal Officer	Deputy Principal Legal Officer	Reserved
1	Level 1-Human Resource Manager	Principal Officer-Grade 7	Reserved
1	Director of NI Court Service	Grade 3-Senior Civil Service	Reserved
Total number of posts 8			
2002			
1	Level 2B-Learning and Development Officer	Staff Officer	Non Reserved
5	Level 4-Court Crier/Tipstaff	Support Grade 1 and 2	Reserved
2	Legal 2A-Legal Officer	Deputy Principal Legal Officer	Reserved
1	Level 3-Assistant Librarian	Executive Officer	Non Reserved
2	Level 1-Accountant	Principle Officer-Grade 7 Accountant	Reserved
156	Level 4-Administrative Officer	Administrative/ Assistant Officer	136 Reserved/26 Non Reserved[1]
4	Level 4-Typist	Typist	Non Reserved[1]
Total number of posts 171			
2003			
2	Level 4-Customer Service Officer	Support Grade Band II	Non Reserved
5	Level 2A-Legal Officer	Deputy Principal-Legal Officer	Reserved
2	Level 1-Legal	Principal Officer-Grade 7 Legal	Reserved
2	Level 2A-Accountant	Deputy Principal Accountant	Reserved
1	Level 2B Website manager	Staff Officer	Non Reserved
Total number of posts 12			

[1] Generic competitions with appointments being made to both reserved and non-reserved posts.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs who in the Northern Ireland Court Service has responsibility for determining whether posts should be reserved. [160335]

Mr. Leslie: The Human Resource Manager is responsible for determining whether posts within the Northern Ireland Court Service should be reserved.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the grade equivalent in the Northern Ireland Civil Service is of post of audit manager for the Northern Ireland Court Service as advertised in competition PB/1/04. [160336]

Mr. Leslie: The equivalent grade of audit manager in the Northern Ireland Civil Service is Deputy Principal.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs on what grounds it is stated that the post of audit manager for the Northern Ireland Court Service is a reserved post from which Irish nationals are excluded in competition PB/1/04. [160337]

Mr. Leslie: The post of audit manager in the Northern Ireland Court Service is reserved in accordance with the Civil Service Nationality Rules on the grounds, inter alia, that the post involves significant contact with the judiciary and access to sensitive information—for example, the personal records of the judiciary.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs according to what guidance the Northern Ireland Court Service reserves posts; and if he will place a copy of that guidance in the Library. [160339]

Mr. Leslie: Posts in the Northern Ireland Court Service are designated as reserved or non-reserved in accordance with the Civil Service Nationality Rules—Guidance on Checking Eligibility. The guidance may be located at http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/civilservice/nationality/contents.asp.

Websites

Mr. Heald: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total annual cost of his Department's websites, including those of its agencies, was in the most recent year for which figures are available. [159516]

Mr. Leslie: The information requested is listed as follows.

Website	Operating costs (2002–03 unless otherwise stated)[1]
Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) www.cafcass.gov.uk (Now the responsibility of the Department for Education and Skills)	£2,532 (+ VAT) per month
Civil Justice Council www.civiljusticecouncil.gov.uk	[2]
Civil Justice Council Costs Website	£3,000
Community Legal Service—Just Ask www.justask.gov.uk	£700,000 (includes staff and development costs)
CLS—Legal Services Research Centre	2001–02: £47
Community Legal Service Partnerships www.clsp.net	£8,000 start up costs incurred in 2002—no further operating costs
Council on Tribunals www.councilontribunals.gov.uk	£1,253.30[2]
Court Service www.courtservice.gov.uk	[2]
Department for Constitutional Affairs www.dca.gov.uk	[2]
Immigration Appellate Authority www.iaa.gov.uk	[2]

Website	Operating costs (2002–03 unless otherwise stated)[1]
Judicial Studies Board www.jsboard.co.uk	£13,077[2]
Land Registry—Main site www.landreg.gov.uk	£12,000
Law Commission www.lawcom.gov.uk	£10, 675[2]
Legal Services Commission www.legalservices.gov.uk	£126,000
Legal Services Ombudsman www.olso.org	£3,151.50
Magistrates Court Service Inspectorate www.mcsi.gov.uk	£3,940.13[2]
Northern Ireland Court Service www.courtsni.gov.uk	£15,000 (+ £55,000 start up costs incurred in April 2002)
Official Solicitor and Public Trustee	£141
Public Guardianship Office www.guardianship.gov.uk	£7,398
National Archives	£147,000
National Archives—Other sites: Family Records; Learning Curve; a2a; Moving Here; Census	Complex arrangements with various partners, National Archives contribution assessable only at disproportionate cost

[1] Staff costs are not included (unless otherwise stated), and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.
[2] The sites hosted by Cable and Wireless (2002–05) under a three-year contract. The hosting element of this is £158,796 per annum for a total of eight sites.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Village Halls

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much funding was given by *(a)* the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, *(b)* the Rural Enterprise Scheme and *(c)* landfill tax to village halls in each of their years of operation. [159677]

Alun Michael: Only very partial information is available. I list such information as we have:

(a) Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund

The Fund was introduced by the Finance Act 2001 and came into force on 1 April 2002. The levy was set at £1.60 per tonne of aggregates produced. The fund was launched in 2002 and will continue for at least a further three years. The Fund consists of £20 million for England for 2004–05 and is distributed by a number of organisations including the Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature, and Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Somerset county councils. Information is not collected in a form that permits the total amount of funding for village halls from this source to be established, but, up until last May, at least £70,776 has been distributed to village hall projects.

(b) Rural Enterprise Scheme

Funds are available under the Rural Enterprise Scheme (part of the England Rural Development Programme, or "Pillar 2" of the Common Agricultural Policy) to help 'renovation and development of villages' and 'basic services for the rural economy and population'. The scheme is selective and is delivered by Defra's Rural Development Service in line with regional budgets and priorities agreed with local partners. Support is provided to village hall and other community projects but disaggregated figures relating solely to village hall projects are not available. Total funding for the relevant two measures is as follows:

	£000
2001–02	126
2002–03	1,146
2003–04	[1]3,053

[1] Forecast.

(c) Landfill Tax Credit Scheme

Under the Landfill Tax Credit scheme landfill operators can reduce their tax liability by funding environmental or community projects. The scheme is not available to all village halls (the scheme's rules mean that projects have to be within 10 miles of a landfill tax operator's site). Grants are issued through registered environmental bodies and each will have its own priorities. Action for Communities in Rural England estimate that perhaps £1 million has been provided for village hall projects.

The scheme was reformed from 1 April 2003. Approximately one third of funding (around £47 million) is to be made available through a reformed tax credit scheme for spending on local environment projects. Village halls, where they meet the criteria, will still be able to apply for funding. Government have no involvement in how the funding is spent. As yet, it is not possible to say what proportion will go to support village halls.

Animal Health Act

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she is required to take into account the application of the precautionary principle in assessing the need to make orders under section 29 of the Animal Health Act 1981 to reduce the risk to human health of any disease or organism carried in animals. [157948]

Mr. Bradshaw: Although there is no universally accepted definition, the Government are committed to using the precautionary principle, which is included in the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. The precautionary principle is one of 10 principles that guide the Government's approach to sustainable development, on which Defra takes the lead. The outline Animal Health and Welfare Strategy issued last July also confirmed that all Government decisions on animal health and welfare should be guided by the precautionary principle.

Badgers/Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the Answer of 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 380W on badgers, what numerical value she attributes to the phrase a few kilometres; and whether badgers forage from setts a few kilometres outside Krebs areas into farms within those areas and evade trapping. [157947]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is difficult to attach a numerical value to the distance travelled by foraging badgers as it will vary considerably. Badgers normally forage within their social group territory limits, and the distance they travel to do so will depend on the size of the territory, which will be determined by the availability of food and the quality of the habitat.

It is possible that badgers from social groups occupying setts outside Randomised Badger Culling Trial areas could forage on farms within them. If they did, they might or might not be captured during trapping operations.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the extent to which badger lobby groups are representative of broader public opinion. [158289]

Mr. Bradshaw: The recent review of badger licensing procedures was subject of a public consultation to ensure that everyone with an interest in badgers had the opportunity to contribute their views. Furthermore, as part of this exercise, the Department surveyed the views and experiences of 300 randomly selected people who had applied for a licence under the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992 in the previous year.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of badgers killed in road traffic accidents in each of the last five years; and what measures are being taken to reduce the rate. [158329]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are no figures currently available for the number of badgers killed each year on roads. The most widely quoted estimate, of 50,000 animals each year[1], relates to the 1980s, but road casualties are probably broadly similar today.

A four-year pilot project (called 'Mammals on Roads') is currently under way. This aims to carry out a national road kill survey of selected mammal species (including badgers), calibrating road kill numbers with species abundance in various habitats and assessing the power of the survey to detect population change. In the project's June 2003 newsletter, it is reported that in 2001 and 2002 approximately four dead badgers were reported for every 1,000 miles of road surveyed. For more information on the project visit the Tracking Mammals Partnership website at: www.jncc.gov.uk/species/mammals/trackingmammals.

Advice and guidelines for road builders on how to minimise road casualties are given in the Highways Agency publication:

"Design manual for roads and bridges" Volume 10—Environmental Design and Management, Section 4—Nature Conservation, HA 59/92—Mitigating against effects on badgers.

The manual is available online at: www.official-documents.co.uk/document/deps/ha/dmrb/index.htm.

[1] Harris, S, Cresswell, W Reason, P and Cresswell, P (1992) An integrated approach to monitoring badger (Meles meles) population changes in Britain. In: "Wildlife 2001: Populations" (eds DR McCollough and RH Barrett), pp 945–953. London: Elsevier Applied Science.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of whether TB-diseased badgers bathing in cattle water troughs is a mechanism of TB transmission. [158336]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no evidence that badgers bathe in cattle water troughs, although ongoing research by the Central Science Laboratory indicates that they may drink from them. This research, which will report to Defra in December 2005, will indicate the relative frequency with which badgers visit cattle water troughs, and at what times of year, as a first step towards identifying their role in the risk of transmission of *M. bovis* from badgers to cattle.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what level of disease in the wild *(a)* badger and *(b)* deer population she classes as tolerable. [158339]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not currently known what level of infection in either badgers or deer constitutes a threat to their welfare, or a risk to cattle. Consequently, it is not possible to identify a 'tolerable' level in these terms.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what new advice she will give to farmers on the *(a)* design and *(b)* positioning of cattle feed troughs following discovery that badgers can access troughs previously thought inaccessible. [157934]

Mr. Bradshaw: Changes in trough design might be appropriate. Recent work has established that badgers are capable of climbing into feed troughs set at 115cm above ground level, at which height they are inaccessible to cattle. It is also difficult to position troughs so that only cattle can access them, unless they are inside badger-proof buildings. Possibly troughs could be suspended from the ceilings of buildings to deny access by badgers. However, the purpose of many troughs is to provide supplementary feed to cattle at pasture, so badgers are likely to be able to access them wherever they are positioned.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the costs of reducing TB in the wildlife reservoir to a level where it is no longer epidemiologically significant. [157937]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have not made any estimate of the cost of reducing TB in the wildlife reservoir to a level where it is no longer epidemiologically significant.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her estimate was of the total number of badgers which would be killed during the full implementation of the Krebs trials. [157942]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Krebs Report suggested that some 12,500 badgers might be taken during a five-year trial, based on the assumption that average badger density is around 5/km^2. The second report of the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB stated that this figure was likely to be an overestimate, based on experience from the Randomised Culling Trial up to that date.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what incidences have occurred of multiple TB breakdowns in cattle herds on farms neighbouring badger sanctuaries. [158290]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have insufficient information to answer the question. Defra does not keep a record of the location of badger sanctuaries.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the closed season adopted in the Krebs trials affected the success rate of the trapping operation. [158292]

Mr. Bradshaw: In its first report (published July 1998), the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB recommended the introduction of a closed season in the Randomised Badger Culling Trial, and advised: "Although a closed season from 1 February to 30 April will delay the reactive response to some positive herd tests carried out in the winter, we are confident that the scientific rigour of the trial will be maintained". The Government accepted the Group's recommendation.

It is not possible to assess the impact that the closed season has had on the success rate of the trapping operation, as there are no control data with which to draw a comparison.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of whether radical changes in farming practices would affect the carrying capacity of the badger habitat, with particular reference to *(a)* reduction in livestock farming and *(b)* crops. [158293]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are not aware of any such assessment having been undertaken.

In the report "Changes in the British badger population, 1988 to 1997"[1] it is stated that 'habitat richness' (ie how favoured a habitat is by badgers) is an important factor influencing the distribution and density of badgers.

Environmental changes, including those brought about by farming practices, can alter habitat richness, and thus have the potential to influence the 'carrying capacity' of a habitat for badgers.

[1] "Changes in the British badger population, 1988 to 1997" by G. Wilson, S. Harris and G. McLaren (1997), published by the People's Trust for Endangered Species (ISBN 1 85580 018 7).

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 523W, on badgers, whether the quantification of bird remains in badger dung takes into account the limited seasonal availability to badgers of ground nesting birds; and whether the proportion of bird remains found in fresh badger dung is different between March and June. [158588]

Mr. Bradshaw: The quantification of bird remains in the diet of the badger mentioned in the answer of 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 523W, does not specifically take into account the seasonality of bird remains in the dung of the badger. The data concerned were collated from already published studies, many of which did not contain sufficient detail to enable such an analysis. Furthermore, it is difficult to come to conclusions regarding the seasonality of bird predation from examining remains in dung as this method cannot differentiate between predation and the scavenging of carcasses.

Defra is currently funding research on badger predation on ground nesting birds. The project involves a review of current knowledge and intensive field investigations to assess the extent of predation by badgers. The project, which is being undertaken by the Central Science Laboratory, will report its findings in March 2005.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 216–17W, on bovine TB, what the approval requirements are which farmers must meet in order to qualify for multiple pick-up authorisation. [158590]

Mr. Bradshaw: The conditions under which multiple pick-ups may take place are set out in Annex B of the General Licences for the Movement of Cattle. The licence can be found on the Defra website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/movements/documents/default.htm.

An inspection is carried out to ensure that the requirements of the licence can be met. The inspection is carried out either by animal health officers, veterinary officers, temporary veterinary inspectors or local veterinary inspectors and is at Defra's expense.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she collates on the prevalence of bovine TB in other countries where there is a significant dairy or beef industry. [158600]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has access to the official TB prevalence data routinely submitted by other countries to the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) and other organisations with an interest in this field.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether bovine animals suffering from TB are more infective than badgers at comparable stages of the disease. [158601]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no evidence to indicate that badgers and cattle at the same stage of disease differ in their ability to infect other animals. However, the risk of another animal becoming infected will vary depending on many factors, including proximity, amount of organisms being shed, the route of shedding, and challenge route (e.g. ingestion or inhalation) among others.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the M. bovis bacilli is mutating to a less *(a)* virulent and *(b)* infective form. [158604]

Mr. Bradshaw: Molecular typing data of M. bovis isolates provide some support for the hypothesis that expression of an infection event at the herd level varies depending on molecular type. M. bovis will be subject to

selective forces like any other organism. However, there is little evidence to suggest that M. bovis is becoming more or less virulent or infective overall.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the issuing of licences to kill badgers under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992; and how many such licences she expects to issue in each of the next five years. [158605]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is responsible for issuing licences under two separate sub-sections of the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 which permit badgers to be killed. These are:

10(2)*(a)* for the purpose of preventing the spread of disease, to kill or take badgers, or to interfere with a badger sett, within an area specified in the licence by any means so specified, and

10(2)*(b)* for the purpose of preventing serious damage to land, crops, poultry or any other form of property, to kill or take badgers, or to interfere with a badger sett, within an area specified in the licence by any means so specified.

It is current policy not to issue any licences under sub-section 10(2)*(a)* to prevent the spread of bovine tuberculosis, except for animals held in captivity.

With respect to sub-section 10(2)*(b)* , licence applications to prevent serious damage are judged on a case by case basis. Licences, irrespective of whether they are to kill, relocate of simply to interfere with a sett will only be issued where:

there is evidence that serious damage is being or is likely to be caused;

there are no other practical methods of resolving the problem; and

the action proposed will be successful in preventing or reducing any damage that might be being caused.

The Department does not place unnecessary restrictions on the control of badgers where they are causing genuine problems. However, a licence to kill badgers cannot be granted if there are non-lethal methods of preventing the damage available.

The Department cannot predict how many licences to kill badgers will be issued in each of the next five years. Figures for the last three years are available online at: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/statistics/statistics- badger.htm

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of TB breakdowns over the next 10 years that will be prevented by the introduction of pre-and post-movement testing; and what the scientific basis for that estimate is. [158622]

Mr. Bradshaw: The main potential benefit of introduction of pre and/or post-movement testing is fewer movements of infected animals into low risk areas. It is a precautionary measure that we would expect to reduce the number of new incidents in low risk areas. Uncertainties around the role of wildlife in geographic spread makes it difficult to be certain about the extent of disease control benefits. The Independent Scientific Group has supported the principle of pre-and/or post-movement testing to prevent the spread of disease.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what plans she has made for the establishment of a secure badger testing facility to assist in the development of a badger TB vaccine; and what measures she proposes to take to minimise interference by animal rights activists; [158623]

(2) what her current estimate is of the size of the facility needed to contain a sufficient number of badgers to enable vaccine studies to be conducted; and what estimate she has made of the *(a)* cost and *(b)* annual running cost of such provision. [158631]

Mr. Bradshaw: No decision has been taken to establish in Great Britain a secure badger testing facility to assist in the development of a badger TB vaccine, but the Government, in December 2003, published the Independent Scientific Group's Vaccine Scoping Study (PB 9102, available from the House of Commons Library) where in Appendix 8, pages 58–61, a full account is given of the feasibility, size and costs for providing accommodation for badgers. If the construction of a facility were considered, the police would be asked for their advice on security in order to minimise interference by animal rights activists.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what benefits have accrued from the collaboration between the Veterinary Laboratory Agency and New Zealand researchers in respect of control of bovine TB in the United Kingdom. [158629]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra's Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) has active collaborations with researchers in New Zealand working on developing TB vaccines for possums and cattle.

One benefit of this link is that the efficacy of promising vaccine candidates can be rigorously tested using large groups of cattle in New Zealand. This approach is highly cost effective and is jointly funded by Defra and funding agencies in New Zealand. This work has so far resulted in the identification of a vaccine that is better than the use of BCG (Bacillus Calmette Guerin) in cattle. Another benefit has been that the development and evaluation of new diagnostic tests has been accelerated through this collaboration. A third benefit of the link has been that results from research into TB in possums and cattle in New Zealand is made available to VLA and Defra at an early stage.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of measures to protect farm buildings housing livestock from ingress by badgers in ensuring complete exclusion of badgers from cattle areas; [158630]

(2) what measures her Department has identified to prevent badgers gaining access to cattle sheds and thence access to cattle feed. [158751]

Mr. Bradshaw: A Defra-funded study, being carried out by the Central Science Laboratory, is attempting to identify which types of building are most accessible to badgers, and what potential measures could be taken to reduce this phenomenon. Results from this study will be reported in December 2005.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received from the Woodland Trust on the culling of badgers. [159055]

Mr. Bradshaw: No representations have been received from the Woodland Trust on the culling of badgers.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what records her Department keeps of the *(a)* number of badgers admitted to animal sanctuaries, *(b)* number of such animals held in captivity at any one time, *(c)* number of animals released into the wild and *(d)* location of those releases. [159057]

Mr. Bradshaw: If a disabled badger is taken for the sole purpose of tending it (as set down in section 6*(a)* of the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992) there is no legal requirement to notify the Department, and therefore no records are kept.

If a badger is taken, kept or released under the authority of a licence issued by Defra, then detailed records of such activities would be held by the licensing authority.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated cost is of the consultation workshops to be carried out in connection with her consultation document on preparing for a new strategy on bovine tuberculosis. [159058]

Mr. Bradshaw: The estimated cost to Defra of organising regional meetings in England to discuss with stakeholders the issues raised in the consultation document "Preparing for a new GB strategy on bovine tuberculosis" is £60,000-£65,000.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many injuries have been sustained by *(a)* livestock keepers and *(b)* their workers while (i) assisting veterinary surgeons in administering TB tests to cattle and (ii) otherwise handling cattle for the purpose of assembling them for testing since 1997. [159063]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Health and Safety Executive do not hold specific data on the number of accidents occurring on farms that can be directly attributed to TB testing.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the feasibility of use of the current BCG vaccination for cattle to damp down the disease as a control option as part of an overall control strategy for reducing the incidence of TB in cattle. [159064]

Mr. Bradshaw: The feasibility of using BCG to vaccinate cattle against TB was assessed by a sub-group of the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB and a report was published by them in December 2003: "Development of vaccines for Bovine Tuberculosis". The conclusion reached was that in its present form, BCG would not provide an effective cattle vaccine.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the implications for the badger population if bovine TB is allowed to spread into previously clean areas. [159065]

Mr. Bradshaw: Currently there is no information to suggest that bovine TB can regulate badger populations. Evidence from the Central Science Laboratory's study at Woodchester Park suggests that infected badgers can live for many years and still breed successfully.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what the Independent Science Group's recommendations were in respect of gamma interferon testing; and which of those recommendations have been implemented; [158332]

(2) pursuant to her Oral Answer of 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 882–3, on bovine TB, what the ethical and legal issues involved in the field testing of gamma interferon are. [158753]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB recommended that the gamma-interferon pilot should be expanded into a research project to help clarify the sensitivity and specificity of the bovigam test by taking blood from all cattle in a herd before skin test reactors are sent for slaughter, and again at the 60 day test. They proposed that all animals in the herds should be tested using the bovigam test, even where the experimental protocol would not require the removal of animals which reacted positively to the test. The Group also proposed extending the test to control herds not affected by TB in *(a)* areas with a TB problem, and *(b)* low TB-risk areas, but not acting on the information gleaned. In addition the ISG recommended that diagnosis of bovine TB in slaughtered cattle should be carried out using an extended post-mortem examination. These recommendations have not been implemented.

The ethical issues associated with the ISG's proposals relate to leaving those animals which have given a positive response to a test for bovine TB, on farm. The legal issues relate to taking samples from animals for experimental purposes, rather than for the diagnosis of disease.

Deer (TB Testing)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what arrangements are in place for TB testing of farmed deer; and whether such testing is compulsory. [158288]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no routine statutory TB testing programme for farmed deer. All TB testing of deer, apart from that for imported animals, is carried out at the owner's expense. Arrangements for testing are made between herd owners and their veterinary surgeons.

The Tuberculosis (Deer) Order 1989, as amended, makes TB in deer a notifiable disease. The owner or person in charge of deer is required to notify the presence of affected or suspected animals to the Divisional Veterinary Manager (DVM) of the State

Veterinary Service. Under these circumstances the DVM may require testing of the deer, at the owner's expense.

GM Crops

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the implications of the recently reported deaths of 12 cattle in Hesse, Germany, in a dairy herd fed on GM fodder maize. [157753]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* I understand that the German authorities have investigated the incident thoroughly and concluded that the deaths, which occurred in 2001 and 2002, were unrelated to the use of GM maize Bt176 in the cows' feed.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the number of UK local authorities declaring themselves GM-free zones. [161725]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* We do not collate information on the number of local authorities who declare themselves GM-free zones. Under EU law it is not possible for Governments or local authorities to impose a blanket ban on the use of approved GM products, including the commercial cultivation of approved GM crops.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 561W, on GM crops, what assessment she has made of the Monsanto GM virus-resistant sweet potatoes grown in Kenya. [161726]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* No assessment has been made on Monsanto GM virus-resistant sweet potatoes grown in Kenya. Assessments on crops grown in non-EU countries will only be made when an application is made to import the product into the EU. The Kenyan GM sweet potato is however one of the case studies covered in the report by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics.

Livestock Movements

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated charge to be borne by farmers for pre- and post-movement testing is; and whether there will be an additional veterinary surgeon call-out fee. [158624]

Mr. Bradshaw: The proposal as set out in the consultation document Preparing for a new GB strategy on bovine TB' is for pre-movement testing of cattle moving from one and two year testing herds to other herds. The resource implications of this proposal will be estimated as part of the consultation process which will involve discussions with veterinary and farming interests.

The charge, and whether or not there is a call out fee, will depend upon the commercial negotiations between farmers and their veterinarians.

Pesticides

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what other gaseous pesticides were *(a)* investigated and *(b)* declared inhumane following an investigation by Porton Down on the use of hydrogen cyanide to gas badgers. [157935]

Mr. Bradshaw: In 1980, at the suggestion of Lord Zuckermann, the Chemical Defence Establishment (CDE) at Porton Down was commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries (MAFF) to assess the acceptability of the use of Hydrogen Cyanide (HCN) to control the badger population.

Records indicate that in 1982 the results from this research led to the agriculture Minister, Mr Walker, ordering a ban on the use of HCN to kill badgers. The details of the research were publicised in a MAFF Press Notice (No. 249) issued on 1 July 1982.

Subsequent to this announcement, records indicate that discussions between CDE and MAFF were undertaken concerning groups of potentially toxic compounds which could be of use in pest control. However, there is no evidence to suggest that any further research with gaseous pesticides was undertaken involving badgers, although some practical assessments involving non-gaseous methods were undertaken using other animals, including foxes.

This latter research on contingency plans in the event of rabies becoming established in the UK was undertaken for MAFF, between 1977 and 1981, and was designed to determine a replacement for strychnine in baited poison.

References:

1. The Toxicity of Hydrogen Cyanide by Inhalation to Ferrets and Badgers. Technical Report 15/123—this report was a Commercial-in-Confidence report for MAFF detailing research undertaken on a MAFF contract.

2. Compounds for Fox Control (Addendum to Interim Report of July 1977). Effectiveness of Atropine and P_2 S in Protecting Rats and Rabbits Poisoned by T3327 (Carbamate) and T3415 (Phosphate). Commercial-in-Confidence. May 197[illegible]

3. The Development of a Humane and Effective Compound for the Control of Fox Populations. Commercial-in-Confidence, Contract Report PTA/15/52/81. July 1981.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health on the risk to public health posed by the use of pesticides; and if she will make a statement. [161103]

Alun Michael: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and other Cabinet colleagues on a wide range of subjects. It remains Defra's position that the current risk assessment process for pesticides provides robust safeguards for public health; a view that is endorsed by the independent scientists on the Advisory Committee on Pesticides. The Department of Health is a partner to the pesticides regulatory process, and has accepted the advice of the Advisory Committee on this issue.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the National Farmers'

Union on the spraying of pesticides on crops which are situated close to residences or footpaths; and if she will make a statement. [161104]

Alun Michael: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular discussions with key stakeholders, including the NFU, on a wide range of subjects, as do all members of the ministerial team.

Ragwort

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Highways Agency about the control of ragwort; and if she will make a statement. [161106]

Alun Michael: Defra has regular contact with the Highways Agency about the control of Ragwort. I wrote to the Chief Executive of the Highways Agency in September 2002 reminding the Agency of the need to take effective action to control ragwort growing on the verges of motorways and other trunk roads to prevent the risks to horses and other livestock from ragwort poisoning. More recently, the Highways Agency was consulted on the draft Code of Practice to prevent the spread of ragwort, which I launched at the Hickstead Horse Show in July last year and responded positively.

The Highways Agency will be among those consulted when the revised code is issued for formal public consultation as required by the Ragwort Control Act. Finally, following the changes that I made in the way that Defra investigates complaints about injurious weeds, my officials have been working with the Highways Agency to streamline the way complaints from the public are handled. As a result the Highways Agency has established a central telephone point for all complaints involving ragwort and other injurious weeds growing on the verges of motorways and other trunk roads. This number has been included in Defra Weeds Act guidance leaflet.

Rights of Way (Vehicle Access)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she had with disability groups on access to the countryside prior to launching the consultation on the use of mechanically-propelled vehicles on rights of way. [161546]

Alun Michael: Last December I met a number of groups representing people with disabilities, under the banner Countryside For All, to discuss rights of way issues. We will look carefully at the responses from such groups to our consultation document.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she had with *(a)* the Home Office, *(b)* chief constables and *(c)* police authorities on the use of rights of way by mechanically-propelled vehicles prior to launching the consultation. [161547]

Alun Michael: The consultation paper was drafted with the assistance and agreement of the Home Office. I intend to meet the Association of Chief Police Officers shortly. We had lengthy discussions with the West Yorkshire police, who have particular expertise in off-road vehicular enforcement, before publishing the consultation paper.

Rural Payments Agency

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 3 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 941–42W, on Rural Payments Agency, if she will publish the official communication sent to farmers regarding initialled alterations; and how and when IACS applicants were advised that amendments must be crossed through. [160919]

Alun Michael: Prior to 2004, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) advised applicants that alterations must be initialled and dated by them and that they must not use correcting fluid. This has been included in the information at the top of the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) base form which is sent annually to all farmers claiming aid under IACS. Other RPA schemes have a similar policy.

For the 2004 scheme year these forms have asked applicants to sign rather than initial any changes. To reinforce this the accompanying supplement which updates the 2003 booklet has an entry under the heading "Points Relating To General Guidance For Completing The IACS Area Aid Application" as follows:

"Correction fluid and changes

3. Correction fluid must not be used on the base form or the field data printout. Should an entry need changing it should be crossed through, the correct information entered and the change SIGNED and dated. If this procedure is not followed it may require the return of the claim which could delay the processing of the claim and incur penalties."

The forms and the supplement are currently being mailed to all registered IACS applicants with completion expected by the end of March. All applicants should receive them by 8 April.

In order to safeguard the applicant in that no changes are made to their application without their knowledge, and in order to demonstrate that the information is complete/accurate and clearly shows precisely what information was intended for the application, RPA has instigated procedures to support their obligations to ensure that the correct aid is paid to the correct person.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 3 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 941–42W, on the Rural Payments Agency, when she received the legal advice on alterations to claims; what steps she took to communicate it to applicants; and whether the legal advice reflected *(a)* decisions of or *(b)* guidance from the European institutions. [160920]

Alun Michael: The legal advice which formulated these procedures was not based on specific decisions or guidance from the European Institutions but by forming a practice enabling the correct aid to be paid with a defined audit trail linking the information provided to the aid paid and safeguarding the interests of the applicant and the Rural Payments Agency.

This advice will be communicated to applicants on the IACS base forms for the 2004 scheme year. Applicants will be asked to sign rather than initial any changes and to reinforce this the accompanying supplement which updates the 2003 booklet has an entry under the heading "Points Relating To General Guidance For Completing The IACS Area Aid Application" as follows:

"Correction fluid and changes

3. Correction fluid must not be used on the base form or the field data printout. Should an entry need changing it should be crossed through, the correct information entered and the change SIGNED and dated. If this procedure is not followed it may require the return of the claim which could delay the processing of the claim and incur penalties."

The forms and the supplement are currently being mailed to all registered IACS applicants with completion expected by the end of March, all applicants should receive them by 8 April.

Sheep Tagging

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has for introducing electronic tagging of sheep; and if she will make a statement. [161548]

Mr. Bradshaw: Electronic identification of sheep becomes compulsory under EU law from 1 January 2008 and is currently being used as a component of the National Scrapie Plan. We are anticipating the widespread use of this technology and have recently launched a pilot project on a minimum of 50 commercial sheep farms to assess how industry can make best use of electronic identification and to identify any issues that may arise.

Single Farm Payments

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had and what advice she has received from *(a)* farmers' organisations, *(b)* landowners' organisations and *(c)* tenant farmers' organisations since her statement to the House of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1585–1602, in respect of the future of farm support payments. [157122]

Alun Michael: Since the statement, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, has addressed the National Farmers Union AGM and my noble Friend the Lord Whitty, has met with the Chairman of the Tenant Farmers Association. In addition we have received a number letters from farmers and landowners' organisations. Inevitably some anxieties have been expressed about the impact of the decision in certain sectors and areas. However, many of the comments show an appreciation that we took that decision in the long-term interests of the industry and demonstrate a willingness to move forward and work with the Department on the detail of implementation.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Digital Television

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Coventry, South (Mr. Cunningham) of 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 825W, when she expects the review of legal constraints on digital television signals to be completed. [161919]

Estelle Morris: The Digital Action Plan identified a need to review planning rules ahead of any decisions about the timing of digital switchover. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister published a consultation paper in April 2003 setting out proposals for possible changes to the planning rules governing the installation of satellite dishes and other antenna. ODPM are considering the responses and will announce whether any changes are necessary in good time before switchover happens. The Northern Ireland Office and Welsh Assembly Government have consulted separately and will announce any changes in due course. The Scottish Executive is planning to consult shortly on possible changes to Scottish planning rules.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in what ways her Department is carrying forward the Government's commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, with particular reference to equal opportunities to recreation and leisure. [161481]

Estelle Morris *[holding answer 17 March 2004]*: One of my Department's key strategic priorities is to enhance access to a fuller cultural and sporting life for children and young people and to give them the opportunity to develop their talents to the full. In support of this priority we have set several targets:

To enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by 5 to 16-year-olds by increasing the percentage of school children who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high-quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum from 25 per cent. in 2002 to 75 per cent. by 2006 (joint target with the Department for Education and Skills).

To help regional and national museums and galleries to deliver education programmes in partnership with schools.

To establish Culture On-line educational projects offering tailored access to the internet to national collections and cultural activity.

To establish 32 creative partnerships so that children and teachers in deprived areas can work with professionals on sustained creative projects.

We also work with other Government Departments and bodies, such as the National Lottery Distributors to promote access and participation to sport and recreation.

Fair Share Initiative

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what budget *(a)* was set for 2003–04 and *(b)* has been allocated for 2004–05 and 2005–06 by each Government Department for the Fair Share initiative, broken down by English region. [161650]

Estelle Morris: Fair share is an innovative joint New Opportunities Fund (NOF)/Community Fund initiative. The initiative began in April 2002, and targets 77 disadvantaged areas across the UK, which for a variety of reasons, have not had their 'fair share' of Lottery funding.

To date, approximately £58 million of the £180 million for the overall initiative has been distributed, 32 per cent. of the total allocated for the programme.

Money is not allocated to particular financial years. NOF have provided a breakdown of what has been committed in each local authority area (and hence region) and I have arranged for copies of the document to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Game Plan Target

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what funding she will make available to sport to meet the target set out in Game Plan that 70 per cent. of the population are active by 2020; and if she will make a statement. [162161]

Mr. Caborn: The Government are investing significant amounts in schools and community sport and physical activity, with the overall aim of meeting the Game Plan target of having 70 per cent. of adults physically active five times a week by 2020.

Planned expenditure from Lottery and Exchequer sources for schools and community sport and physical activity is summarised as follows:

£581.25 million in Lottery funding for school sport facilities in England from the New Opportunities Fund over 2000 to 2006;

£108 million from Sport England and New Opportunities Fund Lottery sources over 2003 to 2006, for community sports facilities under the Active England programme;

a projected £71.5 million over 2004 to 2009 in Sport England Lottery funding for community sport through the nine Regional Sports Boards; and

£459 million over 2002 to 2006 from my Department and the Department for Education and Skills, for the PE, School Sport and Club Links programme, which includes £60 million over 2003 to 2006 for amateur sports clubs under the Community Club Development Programme.

These funding plans are also informed by the Government's target to increase the percentage of school children who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum, from 25 per cent. in 2002 to 75 per cent. by 2006.

The Activity Co-ordination Team will announce the first three year phase of the national physical activity strategy shortly. Future funding decisions on sport and activity will take full account of that strategy.

Horseracing

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who the members of the *(a)* Horserace Totalisator Board, *(b)* Gaming Board for Great Britain and *(c)* Horserace Betting Levy Board were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [162172]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is as follows:

Horserace Totalisator Board

Member	*Term of office*	*Remunerated*
Peter Jones (Chairman)	30 November 2005	Yes
Christopher Sporborg	31 January 2005	Yes
Gerald Grimstone	30 June 2006	Yes
Fiona Driscoll	30 June 2006	Yes
Sir Eric Parker	30 April 2004	Yes
John Heaton (resigned 31 January 2004)	31 October 2007	Yes
Tom Phillips	1 May 2006	Yes
Joe Scanlon	30 April 2006	Yes

Note:
The last three members were executive directors.

The following members of the Board were appointed by the Secretary of State:

Horserace Betting Levy Board

Member	*Term of office*	*Remunerated*
Robert Hughes CBE (Chairman)	31 August 2004	Yes
Sir John Robb	31 December 2006	Yes
Keith Elliott	31 December 2005	Yes

The Board also comprises three members appointed by the Jockey Club; the Chairman of the Bookmakers' Committee; and the Chairman of the Horserace Totalisator Board. On 1 January they were Keith Brown, Sir Eric Parker and Tristram Ricketts; Warwick Bartlett; and Peter Jones. The Jockey Club appointees hold office without a fixed term; and the other members are ex officio. The Secretary of State is responsible for the remuneration only of the Chairman of the Horserace Totalisator Board.

Gaming Board for Great Britain

Member	*Term of office*	*Remunerated*
Peter Dean CBE (Chairman)	30 June 2006	Yes
Roy Penrose OBE	31 July 2004	Yes
Robert Lockwood	31 December 2005	Yes
Michael Steen	28 February 2007	Yes
Gillian Milburn	31 December 2007	Yes
Dennis Gunn CBE	31 December 2007	Yes
Bill Knight	31 December 2007	Yes
Eve Salomon	31 December 2007	Yes

HEALTH

Ambulances (Accidents)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many accidents involving ambulances took place in each London borough in 2003. [160206]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

Year 2003 data are not yet available. Figures for 2002 are shown in the following table.

Number of accidents involving an ambulance[1], by London borough: 2002

Accidents *London borough*	*Number*
Westminster	1
Camden	0
Islington	3
Hackney	5
Tower Hamlets	0
Greenwich	2
Lewisham	2
Southwark	2
Lambeth	5
Wandsworth	3
Hammersmith	0
Kensington and Chelsea	1
Waltham Forest	0
Redbridge	3
Havering	2
Barking	0
Newham	2
Bexley	0
Bromley	1
Croydon	1
Sutton	0
Merton	0
Kingston-upon-Thames	0
Richmond-upon-Thames	1
Hounslow	0
Hillingdon	0
Ealing	1
Brent	2
Harrow	2
Barnet	2
Haringey	2
Enfield	4
City of London	0
Greater London	47

[1] Vehicles with body type "ambulance". Body type is only known for 70–80 per cent. of the vehicle records in the Road Accidents database.

Care/Nursing Homes

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people on average per local authority in England received financial support towards nursing home provision in England in each of the last five years. [161054]

Dr. Ladyman: The table shows the number of council supported residents in nursing homes in England as at 31 March, for 1999 to 2003. Data broken down by council with social service responsibilities has been placed in the Library.

Council supported residents[1] in nursing homes, 1999–2003—England

	Rounded numbers
31 March	
1999	73,465
2000	73,860
2001	71,845
2002	72,630
2003[2]	78,400

[1] Includes permanent and temporary residents.

[2] Data includes clients formerly in receipt of preserved rights.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what percentage of care homes have dedicated respite care places in England; and if he will make a statement. [161931]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government do not hold information on the number or percentage of respite care places in care homes in England.

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his policy is on the provision of drinking water for elderly people in residential care, and if he will make a statement. [161357]

Dr. Ladyman: Care home staff should assist residents in drinking where such a need has been identified in the individual service user's care plan. These responsibilities are set out in the National Minimum Standards for Care Homes for Older People, standards 7 and 15. Care homes also have responsibilities under the Food Safety Act 1990 to ensure safe practices.

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's policy is on the provision of drinking water for persons receiving home care; and if he will make a statement. [161360]

Dr. Ladyman: Staff are expected to assist with drinking where the need for assistance has been identified in the individual's service user plan. These responsibilities are set out in the Domiciliary Care National Minimum Standards, Standards 2, 7, 8, and 11. Domiciliary care agencies have responsibilities under the Food Safety Act 1990 to ensure safe practices.

Defibrillators

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what targets have been set by his Department for increasing the availability of defibrillators in public places; what the *(a)* baseline and *(b)* deadline for each target is; where the targets were announced; and if he will make a statement on progress towards meeting the targets; [151700]

(2) how many defibrillators have been commissioned in public places in each year since 1997. [152306]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In July 2000, the NHS Plan made a commitment to provide 3,000 automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in public places throughout England by the end of 2004.

110 sites are now operational across England, with a total of 681 AEDs installed.

In October 2003 the New Opportunities Fund awarded the British Heart Foundation (BHF) £6 million. This award will provide funding for equipment, community defibrillation officer posts and training equipment. The procurement of these AEDs is being undertaken by the Department of Health and the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency, on behalf of the British Heart Foundation. It is anticipated that these will be available to the ambulance services by August 2004 and all 3,000 AEDs will be in place by March 2005.

The breakdown of AEDs installed at the sites across England in each year is as follows:

107 AEDs were made operational at ten different sites in 2000.

372 AEDs were made operational at 46 different sites in 2001.

200 AEDs were made operational at 53 different sites in 2002.

There were no new sites in 2003.

Two AEDs were made operational at one site in 2004.

Direct Payments

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* elderly people and *(b)* disabled people in each local authority have been offered a direct payment in the latest year for which figures are available. [161915]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the estimated number of elderly and disabled people receiving direct payments for each council in England for 2002–03 has been placed in the Library.

Information on the number of direct payments offered is not available.

Domiciliary Care

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been receiving publicly funded intensive home care or home help in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [161925]

Dr. Ladyman: The table shows the number of households receiving publicly funded intensive home care in England for the years 1997 to 2002.

Information on the number of people receiving intensive home care and home help is not centrally available.

Number of households receiving intensive home care in England, 1997 to 2002

	Rounded numbers
	Households receiving intensive[1,2] home care
1997[3]	—
1998[4]	60,670
1999[3]	68,675
2000	72,290
2001	77,410
2002	81,440

Notes:

[1] Intensive home care is defined as more than 10 contact hours and 6 or more visits.

[2] Households receiving intensive home care purchased with a direct payment are excluded.

[3] Comparable data not available in 1997

[4] Excludes households receiving home care from more than one sector, which in total is an intensive package.

Source:

KS1

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of local authority-funded home care and home help hours in England were contracted out to independent sector providers *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by local authority, in each year since 1993; and if he will make a statement. [161932]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the percentage of contact hours provided by the independent sector in England by council with social service responsibilities in a survey week in September, for 1993 to 2002, has been placed in the Library.

Emergency Services

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* ambulances and *(b)* emergency vehicles used by paramedics and doctors there are in England. [159898]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not held by the Department of Health in the format requested.

The NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (an executive agency of the Department of Health) estimates that the national health service has an ambulance fleet of approximately 5,500 vehicles; this is made up of approximately 46 per cent. patient transport service and 54 per cent. accident and emergency ambulances. This excludes cars, rapid response vehicles and smaller patient transport service vehicles. Information is not collected centrally on the number of these vehicles.

NHS Treatment (Age Limits)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list treatments available on the NHS for which there is an upper age limit; if he will specify the upper age limit for each treatment to which this is applicable; and if he will make a statement. [161926]

Dr. Ladyman: Standard One of the older people's national service framework sets out the general commitment to address age discrimination in access to health and social care. It requires that access to treatment and care should be made on the basis of individual needs not age, and that national health service services should be provided, regardless of age, on the basis of clinical need alone. This will require specific clinical assessment and judgement, taking account of the individual patient's needs and wishes, and the up-to-date evidence on effectiveness of specific treatments available.

Osteoporosis

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many primary care trusts in England have osteoporosis managed strategies as recommended in the National Service Framework for Older People. [158866]

Dr. Ladyman: Osteoporosis is one of a number of important aspects within the development of the national service framework's (NSF) integrated falls service.

The NSF for older people requires integrated falls services to be in place locally by April 2005. The Department will be monitoring formally the 2005 milestone at strategic health authority (SHA) level as this is included as one of the key targets in Improvement, Expansion and Reform, the priorities and planning framework for 2003—06. All SHAs except one currently report that the April 2005 target will be achieved in their areas. The Department has offered support to the SHA that may have difficulty meeting the target across the whole of its area.

Parkinson's Disease

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many consultants in each strategic health authority are trained in the care and complex management of Parkinson's disease. [162230]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will support the extension of specialist nurses in the management of Parkinson's disease to all NHS trusts in England. [162232]

Dr. Ladyman: It is for primary care trusts in partnership with local stakeholders to make decisions about the staff and services required to meet the health care needs of their local populations, including those with Parkinson's disease.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Council Housing

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the local authorities whose tenants have rejected transfer of council housing stock, broken down by *(a)* year of rejection and *(b)* option rejected. [162176]

Keith Hill: Details as requested for local authorities that have had negative ballot results for housing transfer are tabled as follows:

Local authority	*Date of ballot*
Torbay	October 1988
Rochford	November 1988
Salisbury	December 1988
Arun	January 1989
Three Rivers	March 1989
Brentwood	November 1989
Canterbury	November 1989
Redbridge	December 1989
Bournemouth	January 1990
Wokingham	April 1990
South Holland	July 1990
North Kesteven	December 1990
Hillingdon	July 1992
Kingston	August 1992
Woodspring	August 1992
Mendip	July 1993
Rother	October 1993
Westminster[1]	October 1993
Maidstone	November 1993
Poole	November 1993
Thanet[1]	November 1993
Mid Bedfordshire[1]	December 1993
Cherwell	April 1994
Castle Point	September 1994
West Somerset	December 1995
Berwick	July 1996
Cheltenham	August 1997
Sandwell	September 1997
Wokingham	August 1998
St. Helens Wargrave[1]	October 1998
Tower Hamlets—Cityside[1]	October 1998
Bradford Thorpe Edge[1]	January 1999
Cambridge	February 1999
Tower Hamlets—Poplar[1]	May 1999
Fenland	August 1999
Lewisham	August 1999
Waverley	July 2000
South Bedfordshire	August 2000
Wycombe	August 2000
Barnsley[1]	December 2000
Fareham	April 2001
Southend-on Sea	April 2001
Dudley	November 2001
Southwark: Aylesbury Estate[1]	December 2001
Birmingham	March 2002
Merton	July 2002
Ealing: Havelock[1]	November 2002
Stockport	March 2003
Nuneaton and Bedworth	April 2003
Islington Tollington[1]	November 2003
Stroud	December 2003

[1] Denotes partial stock.

Disabled Facilities Grant

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many parents of disabled children in England applied for the disabled facilities grant in 2003; and how many of them had their application means-tested; [162284]

(2) how many parents of disabled children in England who had their application for the disabled facilities grant means-tested in 2003 withdrew from the application process; [162285]

(3) how many parents of disabled children received the full amount applied for in the disabled facilities grant in England in 2003; [162286]

(4) what the total amount paid in disabled facilities grant in England was in 2003; and how much of this was paid to those whose applications had been means-tested; [162287]

(5) what plans he has to abolish the means testing of the disabled facilities grant for the parents of disabled children in England. [162288]

Keith Hill: The total amount of disabled facilities grant (DFG) awarded by local authorities in England in 2002–03 was £173.8 million. All applicants for DFG are subject to a means test.

Information is not held centrally on the number and value of DFGs awarded to parents of disabled children in England and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The latest information available on the type of DFGs awarded and the characteristics of DFG recipients is from the 1996 report into the

Evaluation of the DFG system published by the Department of the Environment. This showed that 5 per cent. of all successful DFG applicants were parents with a disabled child. The report also showed that 35 per cent. of those who initially enquired about a grant withdrew from the process either because they were ineligible for a grant, the council offered them some other form of assistance or because they would not qualify for a grant because of the means test. Of those who withdrew 8 per cent. were parents with a disabled child.

Since 1996 the DFG means test has been amended and a special housing allowance for a family with a disabled child was introduced in 2000. This extra allowance is offset against that family's income.

The Government announced a review the operation of the DFG programme on 5 January 2004. In answer to a parliamentary question from Baroness Wilkins, my right hon. and noble Friend Lord Rooker in the other place said that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, jointly with the Department of Health will be reviewing the disabled facilities grant programme, including the operation of the means test, in the context of the Spending Review 2004. The conclusions of this review will be announced later in the year.

Fire Service

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fire engines there are in England and Wales. [159899]

Mr. Raynsford: On 31 March 2003 there were 2,319 pumping appliances operated by Fire and Rescue Authorities in England and Wales.

Housing

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to publish the research by the College of Estate Management into the valuation of properties purchased under the right to buy scheme. [162239]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects to publish the report of this review in May 2004.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will designate former New Town land in Chorley in Government ownership as land for *(a)* starter homes and *(b)* part-rent-part-buy homes. [161398]

Keith Hill: The identification of land for affordable housing is a matter for the local planning authority in consultation with English Partnerships and other stakeholders.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which local authorities will hold a ballot in the next six months to determine the future of their council housing stock. [161780]

Keith Hill: For stock transfers eight local authorities will ballot their tenants on 13 LSVT programmes in the next six months. The local authorities are; London borough of Islington, London borough of Lambeth, Manchester county council, North East Lincolnshire, Royal borough of Kingston, Trafford Metropolitan borough council, Wakefield and Wirral.

For Arms Length Management Organisations, Nottingham, Sheffield (partial), Slough, Bassetlaw, Brent (partial), Bury, Ealing, Eastbourne, Manchester (partial), Newark and Sherwood, Rotherham, Sandwell and Wolverhampton will need to complete a test of public opinion which may be a ballot, if their bid for a place on the programme is successful, but there is no time-scale in which to do this. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is not aware of any Private Finance Initiative schemes that are planning ballots.

Local Government Representation

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects the working group on local government representation to issue its final recommendations; whether those recommendations will be published; and what timetable for the working group has been established. [162430]

Mr. Raynsford: The role of the Working Group is to enable Government to consider with key interested parties the practical arrangements for implementing structural and boundary changes arising in any local government re-organisation in the event that one or more of the three Northern regions of England votes in favour of a Regional Assembly. Its remit is not to make formal recommendations nor does it have a specific pre-planned timetable. Its first meeting was on 9 March and there will be a number of meetings of the Group and its sub-groups before the autumn.

Parliamentary Boundary Commission

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who the members of the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for England were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [162296]

Mr. Raynsford: The members of the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for England on the 1 January were the Deputy Chairman the Hon. Mr Justice Sir Michael Harrison, Michael Lewer QC and Robin Gray. The Deputy Chairman's current appointment ends in December 2005. Mr. Gray's term of appointment is for four years from 1 January 2003 and Mr. Lewer's for three years from 1 January 2004. The Deputy Chairman receives only expenses; both Mr. Gray and Mr. Lewer receive remuneration.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will reply to the questions tabled by the hon. Member for Cotswold on 12 February, refs 155230–2, on Coverage Care (Gloucestershire) Ltd. [160048]

Yvette Cooper: A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 15 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 59W.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will breakdown his estimate of the £30 million for the set-up costs of an elected regional assembly by main budget heading. [162429]

Mr. Raynsford: The main elements are the costs of the referendums and election, the costs of preparation, including initial staff and accommodation costs, and the transfer of functions to the new Assemblies. These costs will vary between regions, in proportion to the size of the regions population and electorate, but are expected to average £30 million.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish the guidelines on the work of the Government Information and Communication Service which govern the information campaigns *(a)* Your Say: North East, *(b)* Your Say: North West and *(c)* Your Say: Yorkshire and the Humber. [162431]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government Information and Communications Service (GICS) is working to the guidelines issued by the Cabinet Office set out in the note from Mike Granatt, Director General of the GICS to Heads of Information dated 19 June 2003.

Publication of this guidance is a matter for the Cabinet Office.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on what dates he *(a)* referred to the Cabinet Secretary and *(b)* copied to the Minister for the Cabinet Office his proposals for the Government publicity (i) Your Say: A new opportunity for the North East, (ii) Your Say: A new opportunity for the North West and (iii) Your Say: A new opportunity for Yorkshire and the Humber, (iv) Your Say: Business and Jobs and (v) Your Say: Assembly powers and responsibilities. [162432]

Mr. Raynsford: The 'Your Say' Campaign is aimed at informing the public in the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber about the Government's proposal to give them an opportunity to vote on whether there should be an Elected Regional Assembly in their region.

The original concept for the campaign and the designs and texts for all three Your Say leaflets were referred to the Cabinet Office on 8 October 2003, and were approved on 9 October 2003.

The text for the information leaflets Your Say: business and Jobs, and Your Say Assembly powers and responsibilities were referred to the Cabinet Office on 19 February 2004 and received approval on 20 February 2004.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total cost of the public hearings on elected assemblies is estimated to be; and what the individual cost of each hearing is. [162433]

Mr. Raynsford: The cost of the Berwick and Blackburn hearings, including all costs associated with the venue, overtime and advertising were £6,500 and £5,400 respectively.

The other hearings have yet to happen, but estimated costs in terms of venue related costs and advertising are:

Venue	*Cost*
Sheffield	10,000
Newcastle	9,500
Hull	6,800
Liverpool	12,200
Kendal	4,900
Halifax	7,500
Middlesbrough	11,300

The estimated total cost is therefore £74,100.

Social Housing

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's target rents are for *(a)* housing association properties and *(b)* sheltered accommodation, listing the service charge stated separately in each case; and if he will make a statement. [162201]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not set a single target rent for social rented accommodation, or for sheltered accommodation. The formula for target rent for each social rented property, whether a housing association or local authority landlord, reflects size, value and location when compared to all other social rented property.

Service charges in all social rented property, and support charges in sheltered accommodation, are charged separately from rent. The maximum charge to the tenant for service and support is the cost price to the landlord. Charges depend both upon services received, and the landlord's costs for fulfilling the service and support needs of its tenants. Tenants in sheltered housing may also be in receipt of Supporting People grant towards the cost of support services.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Primary School Funding

15. **Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what meetings he has had with local authorities to discuss primary school funding for the next financial year. [162132]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My right hon. Friend, other Ministers and officials have had a number of discussions about funding for 2004–05 with authorities both individually and collectively. Some of these meetings have covered the topic of primary school funding.

Information and Communications Technology

16. **Mrs. Dean:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the extent of the use of computers and interactive technology in schools. [162133]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Schools are making increasing use of ICT to improve the quality of education they provide.

Since 1998 investment has increased five-fold, leading to a doubling of the number of computers in schools, the connection of practically all schools to the internet, and opportunities for schools to benefit from the growing range of high quality digital resources.

Teachers are at the heart of this change and this period has seen significant improvements in their confidence to make use of ICT.

Standard Spending Assessments

17. **Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the standard spending assessment per child in secondary education is on average in *(a)* England and *(b)* Cornwall. [162134]

Mr. Miliband: In 2004–05 the average Formula Spending Share for secondary pupils in England is £3,106 per pupil. In Cornwall it is £2,935 per pupil.

A-level Mathematics/Physics

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students sat the A-level examination in *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* physics in each year since 1994; and what proportion were in private sector schools. [160777]

Mr. Miliband: The total number of students in England who were entered for *(a)* A-level mathematics and *(b)* A-level physics in each year from 1994 to 2003 and the proportion of these entries in independent schools are shown in the following table:

	Mathematics		*Physics*	
	Number entered	*Percentage of entries in independent schools*	*Number entered*	*Percentage of entries in independent schools*
1994	60,419	21.9	32,389	22.0
1995	58,795	22.9	31,255	23.4
1996	62,333	23.2	29,632	23.5
1997	64,132	23.5	29,970	22.2
1998	64,693	23.5	30,844	22.2
1999	63,814	23.8	30,649	22.7
2000	60,963	23.1	29,090	22.8
2001	61,305	23.4	28,816	22.9
2002	50,421	25.0	28,642	22.3
2003	51,438	25.3	27,128	23.5

Adult Residential Colleges

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with the Adult Residential Colleges Association concerning the contribution by residential education to the Government's Skills Strategy. [159526]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: There are 32 adult residential colleges based in rural locations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. These colleges are mainly owned and run by local education authorities (LEAs) and provide, in the main, short courses. They do not receive funding direct from the DfES or the Learning and Skills Council. It is for local Learning and Skills Councils, in discussion with LEAs, to consider whether, and if so how, residential colleges can contribute to meeting local needs in lifelong learning in the light of our commitments in 21st Century Skills to safeguard budgets for such learning. I have not, therefore, had direct discussions with the Association about the role of member colleges in meeting the commitments in the Skills Strategy.

Apprenticeships

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many residents of Buckingham have undertaken apprenticeships in each of the last seven years. [161579]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The information requested is not available at parliamentary constituency level. Nor is the information available for a consistent geographical area over the last seven years. However, the following table shows the number of starts on modern apprenticeships in Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area between April 2001 and the end of July 2003, as well as the number of starts from April 1996 to March 2001 in the three Training and Enterprise Council's (TECs) that amalgamated to become Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire LSC.

Time period[1]*/TEC/LSC*	*Advanced MA*	*Foundation MA*
April 1996 to March 1997		
Heart of England	600	—
Milton Keynes and North Bucks	500	—
Thames Valley[2]	1,700	—
April 1997 to March 1998		
Heart of England	1,000	—
Milton Keynes and North Bucks	700	—
Thames Valley[2]	2,500	—
April 1998 to March 1999		
Heart of England	1,100	100
Milton Keynes and North Bucks	700	300
Thames Valley[2]	1,800	400
April 1999 to March 2000		
Heart of England	900	500
Milton Keynes and North Bucks	500	600
Thames Valley[2]	2,100	1,500
April 2000 to March 2001		
Heart of England	1,000	700
Milton Keynes and North Bucks	600	800
Thames Valley[2]	2,300	2,800
April 2001 to July 2002		
Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire	1,700	3,900
August 2002 to July 2003		
Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire	1,300	2,500

[1] TECs reported the figures in financial years. LSC reports them in academic years. The first LSC "year" was 16 months in order to bring the financial year figures into line with academic years.

[2] Thames Valley TEC also became part of Berkshire LSC.

Sources:

TEC management information

LSC Individualised Learner Record

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what targets his Department has set for numbers of apprenticeships. [162061]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Department has adopted a Public Service Agreement target that in the academic year 2004–05 28 per cent. of young people will start a Modern Apprenticeship programme by the age of 22.

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many residents of the Burton constituency have undertaken apprenticeships in each of the last seven years. [161847]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The information requested is not available at parliamentary constituency level. However, figures are available for Learning and Skills Council (LSC) areas and, prior to the creation of the LSC, Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) areas. The following table shows the number of starts on modern apprenticeships in Staffordshire LSC area between April 2001 and the end of July 2003, as well as the number of starts from April 1996 to March 2001 in Staffordshire TEC area.

Time period[1]	*TEC/LSC*	*Advanced MA*	*Foundation MA*
April 1996 to March 1997	Staffordshire TEC	1,300	—
April 1997 to March 1998	Staffordshire TEC	1,600	—
April 1998 to March 1999	Staffordshire TEC	1,900	1,800
April 1999 to March 2000	Staffordshire TEC	2,100	1,600
April 2000 to March 2001	Staffordshire TEC	2,500	2,400
April 2001 to July 2002	Staffordshire LSC	1,300	3,000
August 2002 to July 2003	Staffordshire LSC	900	2,500

[1] TECs reported the figures in financial years. LSC reports them in academic years. The first LSC "year" was 16 months in order to bring the financial year figures into line with academic years.

Sources:

TEC management information.

LSC Individualised Learner Record.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many residents of Crosby have undertaken apprenticeships in each of the last five years. [160438]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The information requested is not available at parliamentary constituency level. Nor is the information available for a consistent geographical area over the last five years. However, the following table shows the number of starts on modern apprenticeships in Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council (LSC) between April 2001 and the end of July 2003, as well as the number of starts from April 1998 to March 2001 in the four TECs that amalgamated to become Greater Merseyside LSC.

Time period	*TEC/LSC*	*Advanced MA*	*Foundation MA*
April 1998 to March 1999	CEWTEC[1]	1,400	300
	Merseyside	2,400	1,200
	St. Helens CCTE	300	100
	North and mid Cheshire[1]	1,200	200
April 1999 to March 2000	CEWTEC[1]	1,000	900
	Merseyside	2,600	3,500
	St. Helens CCTE	300	400
	North and mid Cheshire[1]	900	500
April 2000 to March 2001	CEWTEC[1]	1,100	1,300
	Merseyside	2,500	4,100
	St. Helens CCTE	300	500
	North and mid Cheshire[1]	1,000	900
April 2001 to July 2002	Greater Merseyside LSC	2,600	7,100
March 2001 to July 2002	Greater Merseyside LSC	2,000	6,000

[1] Denotes TEC also became part of Cheshire and Warrington LSC

Source:

TEC management information

LSC Individualised Learner Record

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many residents of *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley have undertaken apprenticeships in each of the last seven years. [162145]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The following table shows the number of starts on modern apprenticeships in the Lancashire LSC area between April 2001 and the end of July 2003, as well as the number of starts from April 1996 to March 2001 in the two TECs that amalgamated into Lancashire LSC—ELTEC and LAWTEC. Figures for Chorley cannot be provided as information at parliamentary constituency level is not available.

Time period[1]	*TEC/LSC*	*Advanced MA*	*Foundation MA*
April 1996 to March 1997	ELTEC	1,400	—
	LAWTEC	1,700	—
April 1997 to March 1998	ELTEC	1,200	—
	LAWTEC	1,800	—
April 1998 to March 1999	ELTEC	1,000	400
	LAWTEC	1,600	100
April 1999 to March 2000	ELTEC	800	1,100
	LAWTEC	1,900	1,800
April 2000 to March 2001	ELTEC	900	1,300
	LAWTEC	1,800	2,100
April 2001 to July 2002	Lancashire LSC	1,900	4,100
August 2002 to July 2003	Lancashire LSC	1,500	3,300

[1] TECs reported the figures in financial years. LSC reports figures in academic years. The first LSC 'year' was 16 months in order to bring the financial year figures into line with academic years.

Source:

TEC Management Information and LSC Individualised Learner Record

Asbestos

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the buildings occupied by his departmental and agency staff which require *(a)* remedial work on and *(b)* removal of asbestos; what this work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys. [159650]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Within the buildings on the Department's four sites there are only two buildings that currently contain the material, one in London and one in Darlington. The necessary control measures are now in place, which include a programme of regular monitoring and review. Costs for this work are not available and there is no set budget in place for future work associated with asbestos management.

Capital Modernisation Fund

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Capital Modernisation Fund computer-learning centres have been established in Buckinghamshire. [161571]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: There are 49 UK online centres in Buckinghamshire.

Twelve of these have received support from the Capital Modernisation Fund (CMF).

Child Care

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many free child care places provided by the Government have *(a)* been taken up and *(b)* not been taken up by parents of children below compulsory school age in each year since 1998. [161015]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the form requested.

Figures on the number of free nursery education places taken up by three and four-year-olds are shown in the table.

The latest figures on provision for three and four-year-olds in England were published in a Statistical Bulletin "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2003" which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

By April 2004, six months ahead of our original target, all three-year-olds in England whose parents want one, will have access to a free, part-time early education place.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the take-up of nursery places was, broken down by *(a)* public and *(b)* private child care provision for children under compulsory school age in each year since 1998. [161020]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the form requested.Figures on the number of free nursery education places taken up by 3 and 4-year-olds in England are shown in the tables.

The latest figures on provision for 3 and 4-year-olds in England were published in a Statistical Bulletin 'Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2003' which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

We have made the commitment that by April 2004, six months ahead of our original target, all 3-year-olds in England whose parents want one, will have access to a free, part-time early education place.

Number of free nursery education places taken up by 3 and 4-year-old children, England 1998–2003

	3-year-olds			
Position in January each year	*Maintained nursery and primary schools*[1]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*[2]	*4-year-olds*[3]	*Total*
1998	222,000	0	591,500	813,500
1999	225,700	0	593,800	819,500
2000	229,900	40,300	598,500	868,600
2001	226,600	108,800	589,300	924,700

	3-year-olds		*4-year-olds*			
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[1]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*[2]	*Maintained nursery and primary schools*[1]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*[2]	*Total 4-year-olds*	*Total*
2002	223,500	184,700	477,700	106,800	584,500	992,800
2003	218,700	226,100	472,200	107,100	579,300	1,024,000

[1] Headcount of children aged three at 31st December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools Census.
[2] Part-time equivalent number of children aged 3 at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise. Nursery Education Grant for 3-year-olds was allocated to the 65 local education authorities in 1999–2000 and all LEAs from 2000–01.
[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged 4 at 31December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education grant data collection exercise.
[4] Headcount of children aged 4 at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools Census.
[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged 4 at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the EarlyYears supplementary data collection exercise.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if he will make a statement on the number of children in Crosby who have gained from the National Childcare Strategy; [160402]

(2) how many child care places have been created in Crosby since 1997. [160524]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the number of new child care places created in individual constituencies is available only from 1999. Sefton local authority reported that between April 1999 and December 2003, 565 new child care places opened in Crosby constituency. A place typically helps more than one child, as not all children take up places full-time, and we estimate these places will help some 1,000 children. During the same period, Sefton reported that 217 child care places closed in Crosby, so that the stock of child care places rose by 348 helping some 700 children.

Child Employment Report

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the Government will

respond to the Better Regulation Task Force report, "The Regulation of Child Employment"; and if he will place a copy of the response in the Library. [160767]

Margaret Hodge: The Better Regulation Task Force report, "The Regulation of Child Employment", was published on 11 February and we are considering the recommendations carefully. We will respond to the report within 60 working days and a copy of our response will be placed in the Library.

Computers

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people in Buckingham have received a computer to assist in seeking employment or retraining. [161565]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: At present no centrally funded schemes exist which enable people to acquire free or low price recycled computers. In the past such schemes have been trialled but have proved costly to administer to ensure fair distribution of equipment.

Government funding has been focused instead upon establishing the network of UK online centres. People in Buckingham who do not have ICT access and wish to use computers are advised to visit their local UK online centre.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on computers for schools in Buckingham in each of the last seven years. [161573]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My department does not collect information on school spend on computers. However, I refer the hon. Gentleman to my response to his question about funding allocated to schools in Buckinghamshire for information and communications technology (161583).

Connexions

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* young people of the relevant age group and *(b)* personal advisers there are in the area of each Connexions partnership; and what the ratio of *(a)* to *(b)* is in each case. [161093]

Margaret Hodge: The following table shows *(a)* the number of young people aged (13 to 19) in each of the Connexions partnership areas, *(b)* the number of Connexions personal advisers funded through the departmental grant and *(c)* the ratio of *(a)* to *(b)* in each partnership.

	Total 13 to 19-year-old population (a)	*Personal advisers funded through SCYPG grant (b)*	*Ratio of (a) to (b), (c)*
Bedfordshire and Luton	48,466	73	661
Berkshire	67,045	78	857
Birmingham and Solihull	108,253	268	405
Black Country	91,499	155	592
Bournemouth Dorset and Poole	53,368	75	711
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	56,957	85	670
Central London	88,898	278	320
Cheshire and Warrington	70,301	106	664
Cornwall and Devon	124,469	234	531
County Durham	40,742	77	526
Coventry and Warwickshire	67,482	120	561
Cumbria	38,851	73	536
Derbyshire	75,527	138	547
East London	161,916	309	525
Essex Southend and Thurrock	125,549	222	566
Gloucestershire	45,363	55	820
Greater Manchester	217,573	394	552
Greater Merseyside	134,711	289	467
Hereford and Worcestershire	56,428	105	538
Hertfordshire	85,726	114	751
Humber	74,614	197	379
Kent	132,424	186	711
Lancashire	121,426	175	693
Leicestershire	75,977	128	592
Lincolnshire and Rutland	55,232	66	834
Milton Keynes Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire	105,622	146	726
Norfolk	59,688	93	642
North London	80,696	108	750
Northamptonshire	52,790	87	607
Northumberland	24,876	67	371
Nottinghamshire	83,772	155	540
Shropshire Telford and Wrekin	37,937	47	809
Somerset	41,232	70	589
South Central	143,199	215	665
South London	100,229	135	742
South Yorkshire	104,417	276	379
Staffordshire	87,004	144	603
Suffolk	52,528	68	777
Surrey	80,983	96	847
Sussex	111,238	192	579
Tees Valley	58,404	113	519
Tyne and Wear	91,557	174	525
West London	107,145	154	697
West of England	78,732	111	709
West Yorkshire	179,253	333	583
Wiltshire and Swindon	47,875	63	755
York and North Yorkshire	61,774	80	773

Notes:

1. Data on personal advisers relates to the number of full time equivalents in post at December 2003—the latest period for which information is available and is taken from NEXUS, the management information system used to monitor the performance of the service.

2. Personal Adviser numbers exclude those funded by other agencies of which there were 917 in post in the same period and a further 3,252 other delivery staff not defined as PAs whose main role is client/customer contact.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 16 to 18-year-olds have not been in education, training or employment in each of the Connexions partnership areas in each year since 2001. [161095]

Margaret Hodge: The percentage of 16 to 18-year-olds who have not been in education, employment or training in each Connexions partnership area in each year since 2001 is shown in the following table.

A separate exercise estimated that the proportion of 16 to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training had fallen by 3 per cent. in England between November 2002 and November 2003.

Percentage of 16 to 18-year-olds estimated by the Connexions Service not to be in education, employment or training

Percentage

	2001[1]	*2002*	*2003*
Bedfordshire and Luton	—	10.7	6.6
Berkshire	—	—	5.8
Birmingham and Solihull	—	12.1	9.4
Black Country	14.4	13.0	8.2
Bournemouth Dorset and Poole	—	6.8	5.5
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	—	9.7	6.0
Central London	—	14.8	11.5
Cheshire and Warrington	6.8	7.0	6.1
Cornwall and Devon	7.4	7.0	6.1
Co. Durham	—	17.0	11.6
Coventry and Warwickshire	10.3	9.5	4.8
Cumbria	9.2	7.6	6.6
Derbyshire	—	10.3	8.4
East London	—	11.6	11.1
Essex Southend and Thurrock	—	7.5	7.5
Gloucestershire	—	4.1	3.9
Greater Manchester	—	10.0	9.3
Greater Merseyside	12.8	12.1	10.7
Hereford and Worcestershire	—	6.9	5.4
Hertfordshire	—	5.1	4.7
Humber	8.4	10.0	9.2
Kent	—	5.0	6.0
Lancashire	—	9.6	7.2
Leicestershire	—	9.2	6.5
Lincolnshire and Rutland	5.0	6.1	4.7
Milton Keynes Oxford and Bucks.	3.6	5.4	4.4
Norfolk	—	—	6.6
North London	8.8	9.6	8.7
Northamptonshire	—	6.3	8.3
Northumberland	—	—	7.0
Nottinghamshire	—	6.8	3.8
Shropshire Telford and the Wrekin	6.4	6.3	6.3
Somerset	—	4.6	4.5
South Central	—	4.9	4.8
South London	9.3	7.7	5.5
South Yorkshire	10.9	11.4	9.6
Staffordshire	—	10.5	6.3
Suffolk	7.8	8.2	7.0
Surrey	—	2.8	3.7
Sussex	—	5.8	4.8
Tees Valley	—	12.7	9.0
Tyne and Wear	—	16.3	10.7
West London	—	10.2	6.9
West of England	5.1	7.3	6.5
West Yorkshire	—	10.2	8.9
Wiltshire and Swindon	—	5.8	4.4
York and North Yorkshire	—	5.8	4.7

[1] Data relate to all 16 to 19-year-olds. Data for 16 to 18-year-olds are not available.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 16 to 18-year-olds from black and ethnic minorities have not been in education, training or employment in each of the Connexions partnership areas in each year since 2001. [161097]

Margaret Hodge: The following table shows the percentage of 16 to 19-year-olds from black and ethnic minorities at the end of 2003 who were not in employment, education or training.

The percentages are taken from data supplied by Connexions Partnerships. Information on the ethnic origin of young people who have completed compulsory education is only available from April 2003. The data is for 16 to 19-year-olds; data for 16 to 18-year-olds only is not collected.

Connexions partnership	*Percentage of 16 to 19-year-olds from BME groups not in education, employment or training*
Bedfordshire and Luton	6.6
Berkshire	6.9
Birmingham and Solihull	8.4
Black Country	5.7
Bournemouth Dorset and Poole	5.8
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	6.7
Central London	10.9
Cheshire and Warrington	6.5
Cornwall and Devon	6.8
County Durham	10.3
Coventry and Warwickshire	4.5
Cumbria	6.0
Derbyshire	9.1
East London	10.5
Essex Southend and Thurrock	5.2
Gloucestershire	6.3
Greater Manchester	7.4
Greater Merseyside	10.1
Hereford and Worcestershire	5.5
Hertfordshire	4.8
Humber	9.8
Kent	6.3
Lancashire	6.1
Leicestershire	4.1
Lincolnshire and Rutland	6.0
Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire	5.4
Norfolk	4.6
North London	7.9
Northamptonshire	9.3
Northumberland	0.0
Nottinghamshire	2.7
Shropshire Telford and Wrekin	6.5
Somerset	3.1
South Central	3.6
South London	4.9
South Yorkshire	12.0
Staffordshire	6.5
Suffolk	6.8
Surrey	2.4
Sussex	3.7
Tees Valley	8.2
Tyne and Wear	9.6
West London	4.9
West of England	10.5
West Yorkshire	9.5
Wiltshire and Swindon	4.2
York and North Yorkshire	0.8

Note:

Data for Northumberland and Yorks and North Yorkshire reflects the low numbers of Black and ethnic minorities reported in all categories of activity.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of Connexions services for young people are contracted out to external providers; and if he will make a statement. [161694]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* Connexions Partnerships are private companies with obligations to their individual boards. As such we do not collect the information requested centrally. The proportion of sub-contracted services are not separately identified in Partnerships' accounts. All costs are apportioned across three main expenditure headings—staff, premises and administration. Private sector companies have had a leading role from the start of developing Connexions and much use has been made of their experience and expertise.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what factors he takes into account when determining the level of grant allocated to each Connexions partnership. [161916]

Margaret Hodge: The amount of grant allocated to each Connexions Partnership is calculated using a funding formula. The formula allocates 40 per cent. of the budget based on the number of 13 to 19-year-olds in the Partnership area and 60 per cent. based on the additional needs of those young people, as indicated by four proxies. The proxies are the number of young people achieving less than 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C, the number of 16 to 17-year-olds not in education and training, the number of 18 to 24-year-olds who have been unemployed for at least six months and the number of 18 to 24-year-olds claiming Income Support. The formula also incorporates area cost weightings and allocates a fixed amount to each Partnership to cover common costs.

Drugs/Alchohol Misuse (Schools)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on programmes explaining the dangers of *(a)* drugs and *(b)* alcohol misuse in (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools in Lancashire in the last year for which figures are available. [161386]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In 2003–04 Lancashire Local Education Authority (LEA) received £395,863 of Government funding to support drug education in schools. Of this, £261,599 originated from this Department, £114,304 from the Department of Health, and £20,000 from the Home Office to cover enhanced school drug adviser support for Lancashire's participation in the Blueprint research programme. The LEA is able to add to this funding if it wishes.

There has been no direction from Government as to the proportion of this funding that should be spent on education about different substances or on schools in different sectors.

Education Funding

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on higher education in Crosby in each of the last seven years. [160411]

Alan Johnson: There is no higher education institution in Crosby receiving funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Institutions located outside Crosby may be undertaking activities in the area, for example outreach to raise the attainment and aspirations of potential HE entrants, or special arrangements with schools and colleges to improve progression into HE. This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his most recent assessment is of the total funding per pupil in Worcestershire for the next financial year. [162131]

Mr. Miliband: In 2004–05, Worcestershire's total funding per pupil aged 3–19 is estimated at £3,490. That figure takes account of the authority's Education Formula Spending Share and grants allocated so far. It also includes an estimated allocation of the School Standards direct grant for Worcestershire.

Examination Grades

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils in *(a)* Ribble Valley and Fulwood constituency, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* the North West achieved three grade As or more at A-level in each year since 1997–98. [161808]

Mr. Miliband: The percentages of 16 to 18-year-old A-level candidates achieving three or more grade As at A-level in *(a)* Ribble Valley and Fulwood constituency, *(b)* Lancashire local education authority and *(c)* the North West in each year since 1997/98 are:

	(a) Ribble Valley and Fulwood constituency[1]	*(b) Lancashire LEA*	*(c) North West region*
1998	7.1	6.6	5.3
1999	15.0	8.0	5.7
2000	10.7	8.1	5.8
2001	9.3	8.2	5.9
2002	9.4	7.6	5.7
2003	9.7	7.7	5.7

[1] These figures are made up of two institutions in the Ribble Valley and Fulwood constituency.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 15 to 16 year olds in Buckingham achieved five or more GCSEs at grade A to C or GNVQ equivalent in each of the last seven years. [161576]

Mr. Miliband: The statistical information requested is detailed in the following table:

Percentage of 15 year old pupils[1] achieving 5 or more grades A–C*

Academic year	*Buckingham parliamentary constituency*	*England*
1997	54.1	45.1
1998	54.4	46.3
1999	57.7	47.9
2000	56.0	49.2
2001	60.6	50.0
2002	59.4	51.6
2003	63.5	52.9

[1] Pupils are aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 15 to 16 year olds in Chorley achieved five or more GCSEs at A to C or GNVQ equivalent in each of the last seven years. [161602]

Mr. Miliband: The statistical information requested is detailed in the following table:

Percentage of 15 year old pupils[1] achieving 5 or more grades A-C*

Academic year	*Chorley parliamentary constituency*	*England*
1997	53.7	45.1
1998	51.4	46.3
1999	52.1	47.9
2000	56.7	49.2
2001	53.8	50.0
2002	57.4	51.6
2003	61.0	52.9

[1] Pupils are aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August.

Free Pre-school Places

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* free nursery and *(b)* pre-school places were available for (i) three and (ii) four year olds in Buckingham in each of the last seven years. [161314]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the form requested.

Figures on the number of free nursery education places taken up by 3 and 4-year-olds in Buckinghamshire local education authority area are shown in the table.

The latest figures on provision for 3 and 4-year-olds in England were published in a Statistical Bulletin 'Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2003' which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

By April 2004, six months ahead of our original target, all 3-year-olds in England whose parents want one, will have access to a free, part-time early education place.

Number of free nursery education places[1,2] taken up by 3 and 4-year-old children in maintained nursery and primary schools and private, voluntary and independent providers, Buckinghamshire local education authority area: 1997–2003

Position in January each year	*3-year-olds*	*4-year-olds*
1997	600	5,700
1998	700	5,900
1999	700	6,200
2000	700	6,100
2001	1,200	6,100
2002	2,500	5,900
2003	3,900	6,000

[1] Part-time equivalent number of free nursery education places taken up by 3 and 4-year-old children.
[2] A free nursery education place comprises five 2½ hour sessions of early years education per week, for 33 weeks of the year, usually three terms of 11 weeks.

Further Education

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what barriers to re-entering full-time further education for 19-year-olds and over he has identified. [160423]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* Adults who wish to re-enter further education full-time face a range of issues. The National Employment Panel report, Welfare to Workforce Development, which was published on 9 March, refers to a need for improved services and support for learners. The Study of Learners in Further Education (RR 469, September 2003), which my Department commissioned, also highlights the financial implications of being a full-time learner in further education.

Within the framework of the Skills Strategy, the Government is taking action to address these issues and to encourage adults to learn, The measures we are taking include:

The new Adult Learning Grant (ALG), which is being piloted in 10 local LSC areas. This is a major step in helping adults who did not achieve their potential in initial education. ALGs offer a means tested allowance of up to £30 per week for full-time students aged between 19–30 studying for their first full level 2 or first full level 3 qualification. The pattern of attendance required to qualify for ALG means that learners can combine studies with part-time working.

The Government provides 75 per cent. of the standard national course costs to the Learning and Skills Council to pass on to Further Education Institutions (FEIs).

In 2003–04, £96.5 million of Learner Support Funds have been made available for FE students aged 19 + who may find finance a barrier to learning. Learner Support Funds include Access Funds (which can help towards the cost of books, equipment, transport and tuition fees), Childcare Support Funds and Residential Bursaries.

We are also working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to address the financial disincentives to learn for people in receipt of benefits.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the impact of the 16 hour rule on participation rates of homeless people in further education. [160424]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* My Department has not made a specific assessment of the impact of the 16 hour rule on participation rates of homeless people in further education. However, both DfES and The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which has responsibility for the '16 hour rule', recognise that the rule can create difficulties for some people, including homeless people, who wish to participate in, and complete, courses of further education.

DfES and DWP are working together to address financial disincentives to learn for people in receipt of benefits. This is in line with the recommendations of the National Employment Panel report, "Welfare to Workforce Development", which was published on 9 March.

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the further education centres of learning which *(a)* have closed in London in the past five years, *(b)* are due to close this year, *(c)* have opened in the past five years in London and *(d)* are due to open this year. [162107]

Alan Johnson: The Department only holds information on the dissolution of existing further education institutions and the incorporation of new ones. In the last five years Cordwainers College, Ealing Tertiary College, Greenhill College Harrow, Hendon College, Kingsway College, Phoenix College and Weald College have been dissolved and their property, rights and liabilities transferred to other further education institutions to effect mergers. The Brooke House Sixth Form College has been incorporated within the last five years. There are no other dissolutions or incorporations planned this year. Mark Haysom, Chief Executive of the Learning and Skills Council will write with details of any other significant changes.

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make it his policy to require further education colleges disposing of listed buildings to return a proportion of the buildings' capital value to the community which owned them prior to incorporation. [162108]

Alan Johnson: The transaction of land and buildings by a Further Education college is specifically covered by the 'Financial Memorandum' which is a significant part of the contract between the LSC and FE corporations and regulates their relationship on financial and related matters. The 'Financial Memorandum' states that a college would normally apply the proceeds of asset sales to investment in fixed assets and, where the college is proposing to dispose of land and buildings which have been acquired by Exchequer funds, allows the LSC to require the college to surrender some or all of the proceeds.

Building Schools for the Future Initiative

James Purnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Building for the Future programme places requirements on the schools it will benefit to open up their facilities to the wider community. [162389]

Mr. Miliband: It is a requirement for projects being funded through Building Schools for the Future to open up school facilities to the wider community, wherever appropriate.

Learning and Skills Council

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with business on the work of the Learning and Skills Council. [162304]

Alan Johnson: I have regular contact with business representatives to discuss the work of the LSC and skills related issues.

To ensure that business needs are at the heart of the LSC arrangements, and that they are customer-driven, at least 40 per cent. of the members of the LSC, both nationally and locally, and the national Chair and the majority of local Chairs, continue to be people with substantial recent business or commercial experience.

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with the Central London Learning and Skills Council on the future of the Battersea Park Road building of Westminster Kingsway College. [162102]

Alan Johnson: The planning and funding of education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). I am aware that the London Central LSC, having carefully considered the proposal, supports the decision by Westminster Kingsway College to close its site in Wandsworth. It considered that the college's plan make the most effective use of public funds and there is a wide range of other centres in that area providing learning opportunities for the local community.

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding he has made available to the Central London Learning and Skills Council for each year since its establishment; and how many centres of learning were funded through the Council for each of those years. [162103]

Alan Johnson: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). I have asked Mark Haysom, the LSC's Chief Executive, to reply to you direct, copying his reply to me.

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to make the Learning and Skills Councils accountable to the public through the Parliamentary Ombudsman. [162105]

Alan Johnson: The Learning and Skills Council has been brought under the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (the Ombudsman). This came into effect from 16 December 2003 by virtue of Parliamentary Commissioner Order 2003.

Legal Judgments

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received following the judgement of the House of Lords in the cases R *v.* London borough of Barnet ex parte G, R *v* London borough of Lambeth ex parte W and R *v.* London borough of Lambeth ex parte A; and if he will make a statement. [156098]

Margaret Hodge: A representation has been received from the Director of Shelter.

The judgment of the House of Lords is consistent with the Government's understanding that councils with social services responsibilities, in discharging their duties under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, have the power to provide support towards accommodation for children in need and their families. While councils with social services responsibility do not have a specific duty in relation to the children of families who have been deemed intentionally homeless, this is consistent with the fact that they do not have such duties towards the child of any other family. The service response of a local authority will depend, in every situation, on its assessment of the needs of the child, in the context of the wider family, with assessments being carried out under the terms of the "Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families".

Literacy Rates

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the literacy rates for the populations of *(a)* Wales and *(b)* England were in each year since 1997. [161010]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Information on adult literacy skills has not been collected on a regular basis, and annual data since 1997 are not available. However, in October 2003 the Department for Education and Skills published the Skills for Life Survey: A national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. This survey assessed the literacy and numeracy skills of around 8,000 adults aged 16 and above in England.

The literacy findings are shown in the following table. The assessment levels correspond to the new literacy and numeracy core curriculum and National Standards: Level 1 is broadly equivalent to a lower grade GCSE (grade D–G) and Level 2 to a higher grade GCSE (A*–C). Overall around 16 per cent. of adults had literacy skills below Level 1.

As education is a devolved matter, the Department does not have data covering the rest of the United Kingdom.

Overall Literacy
Base: all respondents with literacy level (7874)

	Percentage of 16 to 65-year-olds	*Number of 16 to 65-year-olds*
		million
Entry level 1 or below	3	1.1
Entry level 2	2	0.6
Entry level 3	11	3.5
(All Entry level or below)	(16)	(5.2)
Level 1	40	12.6
Level 2 or above	44	14.1
	100	31.9

Source:
For population figures: Census 01

New Opportunities Bursaries

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in Buckingham have benefited from New Opportunities Bursaries. [161572]

Alan Johnson: Students on designated courses at the University of Buckingham are not eligible for Opportunity Bursaries.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in Chorley have benefited from the New Opportunities Bursaries. [161603]

Alan Johnson: Information about Opportunity Bursaries is held at the level of institutions that provide higher education provision. Apart from that, it is not possible to extract from the data the number of awards for students in any given area. The only further education college in Chorley with higher education provision, Runshaw College, is not participating in the Opportunity Bursaries pilot; and nor have any students with an Opportunity Bursary transferred to Runshaw College.

Nurseries

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many new nurseries have been established in Buckingham since 1997; [161312]

(2) how many *(a)* Sure Start and *(b)* Early Excellence Centres have been created in Buckinghamshire. [161313]

Margaret Hodge: Since 1997, five new nurseries have been established in the constituency of Buckingham creating 150 additional places. There is a Sure Start local programme in the High Wycombe area providing Sure Start services for around 869 children and their families. A Neighbourhood Nursery attached to the Sure Start Centre is set to open in April 2004 and will deliver 50 new full daycare places. There are no Early Excellence Centres in Buckinghamshire.

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many 3 and 4-year-olds attended part-time nurseries on the latest date for which figures are available. [161654]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the form requested.

In January 2003, 1,024,600 free nursery education places were taken up by 3 and 4-year-olds in maintained nursery and primary schools and private, voluntary and independent providers in England.

The latest figures on provision for 3 and 4-year-olds in England were published in a Statistical Bulletin 'Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2003' which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

By April 2004, six months ahead of our original target, all 3-year-olds in England whose parents want one, will have access to a free, part-time early education place.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he will answer the Question tabled by the hon. Member for Winchester on 14 January, ref 147904, in relation to security passes. [162390]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: A reply has been issued today.

Pathfinder Schools (Additional Staff)

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to provide security of tenure after 2005–06 for additional staff taken on in pathfinder schools to meet the requirement of the workload agreement pilot; and if he will make a statement. [161906]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 17 March 2004]:* As part of the Pathfinder project, funding was made available for those schools that employed additional support staff. It was made clear to schools that this funding was provided for the financial years 2002–03 and 2003–04 only and that they would need to consider how to mainstream posts within their base budgets after the programme came to an end.

Prisoner Education

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent by prisons in England and Wales on providing *(a)* basic skills entry level tuition, *(b)* basic skills level 1 tuition, *(c)* basic skills level 2 tuition and *(d)* key work skills tuition in 2002–03. [161720]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The total spend in 2002–03 on contracted education hours was £52,305,802. We estimate that 37 per cent. of this was spent on the delivery of literacy, numeracy and English as a Second Language (ESOL) in 2002/03, against all other education.

This spend cannot be split into separate basic skills levels because contracted education hours are not disaggregated by the level of basic skills delivered. We fund prisons to give them flexibility to respond to the range of learning needs in their population.

In 2002–03 the funding for vocational training was the responsibility of the Prison Service. However, in April 2003, £12 million per annum was transferred from the Prison Service to DfES for vocational training.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many prisoners *(a)* commenced and *(b)* successfully completed basic skills training in 2002–03; and how many (i) entry level awards, (ii) level 1 awards, (iii) level 2 awards and (iv) key work skills awards there were. [161721]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: We currently collect overall information on participation and achievement at establishment level. We want to put in place an individual level database which will provide us with this sort of information in the future, not just on prisoners but also on offenders under supervision in the community. This will be increasingly important as we implement the National Offender Management Service and move towards greater use of intermittent custody.

In 2002–03 prisoners achieved: (i) 9,120 basic skills awards at entry level, (ii) 17208 at level 1, and (iii) 15,190 at level 2. They also achieved (iv) 89,092 awards in work skills.

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many *(a)* solely state-financed and *(b)* public-private partnership and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible have been launched in each region in each of the last 10 years; [160945]

(2) how much was spent by *(a)* the Government on solely state-financed projects and *(b)* the (i) Government and (ii) private sector on public-private and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible, in each of the last 10 years, broken down by region. [160946]

Mr. Miliband: The following table shows capital support (excluding the Private Finance Initiative) for investment in school buildings for which data are readily available.

£ million

	1996–97	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
East Midlands	28.3	34.7	57.7	74.3	145.7	130.9	160.8	188.0
East of England	44.1	48.2	68.4	82.9	193.3	152.4	204.7	281.8
London	80.8	95.8	123.7	142.0	232.6	221.6	310.3	407.5
North East	28.4	34.9	47.6	74.3	111.4	108.2	110.9	168.0
North West and West Merseyside	81.4	94.0	126.9	148.3	270.1	239.4	304.0	368.3
South East	110.2	115.6	133.1	139.6	272.7	226.6	335.9	466.3
South West	59.3	65.6	83.3	97.5	174.9	155.7	226.6	287.2
West Midlands	65.4	50.2	79.5	89.7	191.4	150.7	214.3	272.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	57.5	52.1	79.6	141.4	224.4	200.4	238.7	248.7
Total	555.4	591.0	799.7	989.9	1816.5	1585.7	2106.2	2687.7

For information on PFI projects I would refer you to the Signed Projects List, which can be found on the Treasury website: http://www.hm- treasury.gov.uk/documents/public private partnerships/ppp_pfi stats.cfm. This list, which can be searched by department and region, includes all PFI deals signed over the last 10 years. It contains information on the capital value of each project signed. The list is compiled from departmental returns to the Treasury and was last updated in July 2003.

Pupil/Teacher Contact

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the guidance he gives on the physical contact appropriate between teachers and primary school children. [162130]

Margaret Hodge: My Department does not give guidance specifically about physical contact between teachers and primary school children. However, my Department's Circular 10/98: "Section 550A of the Education Act 1996: The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils", which gives guidance about the right of teacher's to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances, also includes advice about physical contact with pupils in other circumstances. The Circular points out that there is a variety of circumstances in which physical contact with a pupil may be appropriate or necessary: that teachers need to exercise their professional judgment about this, and that they should avoid touching pupils in ways that might cause distress or raise concerns. Similar advice is available on the internet in the child protection area of my Department's Teachernet website.

Railways

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what role his Department plays in warning children of the dangers of playing on or near railways. [161387]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Education about safety is included in the curriculum through the framework of Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE). In PSHE lessons pupils are taught about rules for, and ways of, keeping safe, to recognise the risks that apply in different situations and then to decide how to behave responsibly. They should be taught to recognise and manage risk, to be aware when pressure from others threatens their personal safety and to develop assertiveness techniques when dealing with unhelpful pressure.

Although there is no specific requirement on schools to warn pupils about the dangers of playing on or near railways, teachers may well use such situations to illustrate risk more broadly.

Return-to-work Training

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many women in Buckingham

have visited an information and communications technology training centre in order to learn skills to return to work. [161319]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: In the period October 2003—December 2003[1], 1,213 people visited a UK Online centre in Buckingham. 680 (56 per cent.) of these people were women.

Since learndirect was launched in 1999, 498 people from Buckingham have enrolled on a learndirect course. 257 (52 per cent.) of these people were women. Of the total number of women who enrolled on a course 25 per cent. did so in order to learn skills to return to work.

[1] There are no statistics available for UK online prior to September 2003 as the DfES did not collect this data on a centre by centre basis.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women in Chorley have visited an information and communications technology centre to learn skills to return to work. [161449]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: In the period October 2003—December 2003[1], 1,111 people visited a UK Online centre in Chorley. The split between men and women was 489 (44 per cent.) men and 622 (56 per cent.) women.

Since learndirect was launched in 1999, 973 people from Chorley have enrolled on a learndirect course. The split between men and women was 575 (59 per cent.) women and 398 (41 per cent.) men.

[1] There are no statistics available for UK online prior to September 2003 as the DfES did not collect this data on a centre by centre basis.

School Exclusions

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to his answer of 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1381W, on school exclusions (cannabis), when the first term's data, on the reasons for exclusions from schools, will be available. [161793]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: We plan to publish information from the first term's data on exclusions alongside the Statistical First Release on Permanent Exclusions from Schools and Exclusion Appeals in England 2002/03 (provisional), in May 2004.

School Field Trips

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what safety advice is given to schools in relation to field trips; and if he will make a statement; [157786]

(2) how many serious accidents have been reported to the Health and Safety Executive over the last five years which have taken place on *(a)* school trips and *(b)* school premises; [157787]

(3) what impact he anticipates that the guidance relating to school field trips recently issued by the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers in relation to the participation of teachers in school field trips will have upon participation by teachers in those elements of the 14 to 19 curriculum which are required to be supported by fieldwork; and if he will make a statement. [157973]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: My Department has issued Health and Safety guidance to LEAs and schools about the whole range of educational visits including field studies. My Department supports all visits that have clear educational objectives and are carefully risk assessed and managed. Guidelines recently re-issued by NASUWT advise members to consider whether to take part in visits, and advise those who do to heed guidance from their employer and from my Department. A few teachers have been subject to legal action but I am pleased that most teachers continue to take pupils on visits. I expect field visits and other outdoor activities to thrive as teachers become more competent in supervision following visits coordinator training pump-primed by my Department in 2003. The Health and Safety Executive in 2001–02 received reports of 6,363 accidents affecting employees and others in primary and secondary education (including one fatality) and in 2002–03 5,812 (including three fatalities). Earlier or more detailed figures are not available.

School Innovation

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools have applied to the Department for *(a)* power to innovate, broken down by area of innovation applied for and *(b)* earned autonomy, broken down by reason for the application, as a result of the Education Act 2002. [162240]

Mr. Miliband: There have been 46 applications from schools to use the Power to Innovate as follows:

Quantity	*Relevant legislation*	*Innovation*
4	The Changing of School Session Times (England) Regulations 1999	To extend the length of the school day mid academic year, rather than wait until the beginning of the new school year. The purpose of the innovation was to provide extra curricular activities for pupils, freeing up time for teachers to work on planning, preparation, and to draw up education plans for individual pupils.
1	The Changing of School Session Times (England) Regulations 1999	To change the timings of the school day without the requirements set out in regulations to give the minimum of three months notice to parents and to consult parents at a meeting (instead parents were consulted by correspondence). The purpose of the innovation was to end the school day one hour early on alternate Wednesdays from September 2003, allowing staff to have a dedicated two-hour period once a fortnight for planning, preparation, assessment, and to hold meetings.
1	The Education (National Curriculum) (KS2 Assessment Arrangements) (England) Order 2003	Exemption sought from Key Stage 2 National Curriculum testing while replacing these tests with on-going teacher assessment procedures.

Quantity	Relevant legislation	Innovation
1	The Education (National Curriculum) (KS3 Assessment Arrangements) (England) Order 2003	Exemption sought from Key Stage 3 National Curriculum testing while replacing these tests with teacher assessed levels and within school monitoring and evaluation processes.
1	The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999	To deliver the National Curriculum over four extended days freeing up Fridays to offer targeted activities for pupils.
38	The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999	To increase the number of INSET days for activities including: Target setting days Collaborative work between schools Professional development days for teachers Curriculum planning

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Ashford (Mr. Green) on Earned Autonomy on 23 September 2003.

School Meals

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what guidance has been issued to local education authorities in relation to the *(a)* cost and *(b)* quality of free school meal provision; [162078]

(2) what guidelines he has issued to assist schools and local education authorities in assessing the nutritional value of school meals. [162093]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills has produced guidance entitled 'Healthy School Lunches' for school caterers on implementing national nutritional standards, the standards apply to both free and paid for meals. Annex cii of the guidance provides details to caterers on how to assess the nutritional value of school meals. The guidance can be viewed on the website: www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches. In addition, the Secretary of State recommends that the value of a free school meal should be set to enable children to have a standard two course lunch and drink.

School Staff Redundancies

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* support staff in (I) primary and (ii) secondary schools he estimates will be made redundant in (A) 2003–04 and (B) 2004–05 as a result of falling rolls; and if he will make a statement. [162079]

Mr. Miliband: My right hon. Friend has made no such estimates. Decisions on the employment and deployment of teachers and support staff are for local education authorities and school governing bodies.

Sector Skills Councils

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the network of sector skills councils will be operational. [160681]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Good progress is being made in setting up the Skills for Business Network. Eleven Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) have now been awarded five year licences to operate by the Secretary of State. We expect to have around 20 SSCs in place by summer 2004 with a further three joining the network by the end of 2004.

Security Passes

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in (i) his Department and (ii) departmental agencies in the last 12 months; [147904]

(2) how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in his Department in the last 12 months. [150404]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department has since 1 January 2003 the following lost and stolen passes reported:

401 security passes have been reported lost by staff in the Department for Education and Skills.

32 security passes have been reported stolen by staff in the Department for Education and Skills.

No security passes have been reported lost or stolen in the Department for Education and Skills' agencies.

Skills Courses (London)

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students were attending *(a)* English as a second language and *(b)* basic skills courses in London in the latest month for which figures are available, broken down by borough. [162110]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The numbers of enrolments in Greater London on *(a)* English as a second language (ESOL) and *(b)* other Basic Skills courses in London in 2002/03 are set out below. A breakdown by borough is not available, a split is provided by Local Learning Skills Council (LSC).

Enrolments on adult basic skills courses in Greater London in 2002–03 [1]

Thousands

Local LSC	(a) ESOL	(b) Basic skills in literary and numeracy
London Central	49	21
London East	43	30
London North	23	10
London South	17	11
London West	38	11
Total	170	83

[1] Note figures are based on learning aims so may count a learner more than once.

Source:
Learning and Skills Council

Schools Funding

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been allocated to schools in Chorley for information and communications technologies since 2001. [161556]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer my hon. Friend to my response to his question about funding for computers in schools in Chorley for the last seven years on 16 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 226W.

Skills Shortages

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on addressing skills shortages through programmes developed in conjunction with the Learning and Skills Council. [162129]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Skills Strategy White Paper—"21st Century Skills, Realising Our Potential"—set out our ambitious programme to tackle skills shortages. It commits the Government, the Learning and Skills Council and other key partners to a radical strategy of demand-led provision of skills, meeting the needs of employers as expressed through the new Sector Skills Councils, 12 of which are already licensed. New Regional Skills Partnerships will bring together the key players to ensure specific regional skills shortages are addressed, and the whole strategy is overseen at a national level by the Skills Alliance.

Small Businesses (Support)

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the support programmes for small businesses that *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies have financed in each of the last five years; how much money was allocated for each scheme in each year; how much money has gone unclaimed under each scheme; and how many small businesses have benefited from each scheme. [161254]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* The Cross-cutting review of Government services for small business was published in December 2002, and outlines the services provided to small businesses from across Government. My Department and its agencies provides indirect support to small business through measures aimed at workforce development. Some support, but are not restricted to, small businesses, others are specifically for small businesses. The principle programmes through which my Department has supported small business over the last five years are:

The Small Firms Training Loans

(SFTL) programme was introduced in Great Britain in 1994 and closed on 1 February 2003. Firms could borrow between £500 and £125,000 for vocational training, with a repayment holiday of between six and 12 months. The Department paid the interest on the loan during this period and provided a loan default guarantee. The loan repayment term was for up to seven years. Over the life of the scheme 211 loans totalling £1,344,000 were made by Banks, at a programme cost of £533,000.

Key Worker Initiative

For businesses employing 10 to 49 people was launched in 1998 and finished in 2000. Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) delivered this programme.

Employer Learning Networks

A £2.5 million ELN challenge fund was set up in 2000–01 to encourage collaborative action by employers in England. The fund supported 18 projects, which covered some of the smaller firms (with less than 50 employees) across a range of sectors.

Investors in People (IiP)

The National HP programme 1997 included targets for coverage of the workforce and small firms (employing 10 to 49 people) to be achieved by 2002. TECs delivered this initially, it was taken over by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) when it succeeded the TECs in April 2001.

Investors in People Small Firms Initiative

(SFI) was launched on 27 February 2003, as a partnership between the LSC, IiP UK and the SBS. SFI aims to boost the performance, capability and competitiveness of small firms by encouraging them to achieve recognition against the HP standard. The initiative offers business support up to the value of £1,250 to individual small companies on a first come first served basis. The initiative has a budget of £30 million; we will know final take up in March 2005.

Employer Training Pilots (ETPs)

ETPs are currently operating in 12 Learning and Skills Council (LSC) areas. six began in September 2002 with a budget of £ 40 million. A further six commenced in September 2003 and the existing six were extended for a further year using an additional £ 130 million. Of the 7,000 employers that had signed up for ETPs at the end of January 2004 71 per cent. (4,970) had less than 50 employees. In December 2003 the Chancellor announced an extra £ 120 million to extend the existing 12 by a further year and to create a further six pilots.

Leadership and Management

In collaboration with DTI, IIP, Ufi, LSC and others we are trialling a new flexible Leadership and Management development programme for owner-managers and CEOs of SMEs (20—250 staff). The overall budget is £43.7 million over the period 2003–04 to 2005–06. Six Pathfinder areas are setting up in February and March and employers are expected to participate from April 2004.

Student Finance

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the Answer to the hon. Member for Birkenhead on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 209W, on student finance, what estimate he has made of how many of those dependent students eligible for the full combined grant in 2006–07 will be from *(a)* single parent households, *(b)* two-parent households where both parents are working and *(c)* two-parent households where one parents is working (i) in absolute terms and as (ii) a proportion of all students. [162367]

Alan Johnson: The requested data are not available at this stage.

Teacher Vacancies

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teacher vacancies there were in Buckingham on the latest date for which figures are available; and what steps he is taking to reduce them. [161317]

Mr. Miliband: The information is not available in the form requested. In January 2003, there were 47 vacancies for full-time teachers in maintained schools in the Buckinghamshire Local Education Authority (LEA) area, which includes Buckingham.

Like other areas, since 1997 Buckingham has benefited from the initiatives that the Government have put in place to recruit and retain teachers and to increase the number of staff supporting them in schools. Since 1997, the number of full-time equivalent regular teachers in maintained schools in the former Buckinghamshire LEA area has risen by 770, from 5,370 to 6,140 in 2003. Over the same period, the number of full-time equivalent school support staff in the area has grown by 1,270, from 1,880 to 3,150.

Teaching Assistants

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teaching assistants there were in Buckingham *(a)* in each of the last seven years and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available. [161316]

Mr. Miliband: In Buckingham constituency there were 99 full-time equivalent teaching assistants in service in maintained schools in 2003, the latest information available. The table gives the corresponding numbers since 1997.

	Number
1997	54
1998	61
1999	68
2000	69
2001	64
2002	119

Source:
Annual Schools' Census.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teaching assistants there were in schools in Chorley *(a)* in each of the last seven years and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available. [161452]

Mr. Miliband: In Chorley constituency there were 257 full-time equivalent teaching assistants in service in maintained schools in 2003, the latest information available. The table gives the corresponding numbers since 1997.

	Number
1997	97
1998	114
1999	121
2000	143
2001	177
2002	157

Source:
Annual Schools' Census.

Teenage Pregnancy

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the NHS's progress towards meeting the target of a 15 per cent. reduction in teenage pregnancy by 2004. [160916]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* Provisional data for 2002 published on 26 February by the Office for National Statistics shows that conceptions among under 18 year olds in England have fallen by 9.4 per cent. since 1998. Data for 2004 will be available in February 2006 on the 2004 NHS interim target of a 15 per cent. reduction in teenage pregnancy.

Temporary Classrooms

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools use temporary mobile classroom accommodation, broken down by region; and if he will make a statement. [161907]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 17 March 2004]*: The attached table shows the number of schools with temporary classrooms in each Local Education Authority. It is based on data provided to the Department by Authorities as part of the asset management planning process. The bulk of schools capital is now allocated by formula to Authorities and schools so that they can address their local priorities, including the replacement of decayed temporary accommodation. Prioritisation of need through asset management planning should be an open, rigorous and consultative process, based on surveys of the needs of all schools. The Department does not collect detailed information on investment plans or timetables of Authorities. The Department does not encourage the replacement of defective permanent accommodation with temporary mobile classroom accommodation but accepts the necessity in some cases to respond to short term need or emergencies.

Numbers of schools with temporary buildings

LEA	*Schools with temporary buildings*
Barking and Dagenham	7
Barnet	—
Barnsley	26
Bath and North East Somerset	—
Bedfordshire	108
Bexley	56
Birmingham	196
Blackburn with Darwen	1
Blackpool	1
Bolton	6
Bournemouth	17
Bracknell Forest	20
Bradford	52
Brent	36
Brighton and Hove	27
Bristol, City of	65
Bromley	16
Buckinghamshire	49
Bury	—
Calderdale	—
Cambridgeshire	80
Camden	0
Cheshire	154
City of London	—

Numbers of schools with temporary buildings

LEA	*Schools with temporary buildings*
Cornwall	97
Coventry	13
Croydon	60
Cumbria	35
Darlington	—
Derby	25
Derbyshire	177
Devon	175
Doncaster	—
Dorset	35
Dudley	59
Durham	36
Ealing	54
East Riding of Yorkshire	63
East Sussex	96
Enfield	—
Essex	340
Gateshead	35
Gloucestershire	—
Greenwich	—
Hackney	10
Halton	13
Hammersmith and Fulham	0
Hampshire	263
Haringey	21
Harrow	58
Hartlepool	5
Havering	1
Herefordshire	47
Hertfordshire	188
Hillingdon	44
Hounslow	40
Isle of Wight	53
Isles of Scilly	—
Islington	9
Kensington and Chelsea	3
Kent	358
Kingston upon Hull, City of	35
Kingston upon Thames	0
Kirklees	69
Knowsley	—
Lambeth	28
Lancashire	28
Leeds	119
Leicester	56
Leicestershire	196
Lewisham	22
Lincolnshire	160
Liverpool	25
Luton	—
Manchester	23
Medway	—
Merton	3
Middlesbrough	17
Milton Keynes	15
Newcastle upon Tyne	—
Newham	46
Norfolk	308
North East Lincolnshire	26
North Lincolnshire	58
North Somerset	50
North Tyneside	21
North Yorkshire	—
Northamptonshire	148
Northumberland	1
Nottinghamshire	99
Oldham	24
Oxfordshire	128
Peterborough	34

Numbers of schools with temporary buildings

LEA	*Schools with temporary buildings*
Plymouth	40
Poole	23
Portsmouth	5
Reading	1
Redbridge	0
Redcar and Cleveland	14
Richmond upon Thames	12
Rochdale	—
Rotherham	63
Rutland	3
Salford	4
Sandwell	25
Sefton	26
Sheffield	60
Shropshire	55
Slough	19
Solihull	48
Somerset	187
South Gloucestershire	—
South Tyneside	—
Southampton	29
Southend-on-Sea	25
Southwark	8
St. Helens	9
Staffordshire	181
Stockport	38
Stockton-on-Tees	31
Stoke-on-Trent	78
Suffolk	—
Sunderland	18
Surrey	—
Sutton	44
Swindon	52
Tameside	36
Telford and Wrekin	46
Thurrock	—
Torbay	27
Tower Hamlets	9
Trafford	—
Wakefield	—
Walsall	10
Waltham Forest	11
Wandsworth	9
Warrington	21
Warwickshire	142
West Berkshire	40
West Sussex	170
Westminster	0
Wigan	23
Wiltshire	102
Windsor and Maidenhead	27
Wirral	58
Wokingham	40
Wolverhampton	—
Worcestershire	109
York	30

Where no figures are shown, either no data have been supplied by LEAs, or there are clearly significant data anomalies.

Youth Services

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on youth services by each local authority in each year since 1997. [161077]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum/Immigration

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what evidence his Department has received on the possible scale of inward migration to the UK from EU accession states; and if he will make a statement. [161351]

Beverley Hughes: A number of studies have been published which offer estimates of total net flows to the United Kingdom from the accession countries, but these do not of course take account of the measures we announced on 23 February 2004 and the steps we are taking to publicise them in the countries most concerned.

The registration scheme announced by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary is designed to monitor the number of A-8 nationals registering as workers and collate information about the nature and location of the jobs they are doing.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department to which authority a person can report an individual whose visa conditions to remain in the United Kingdom have expired. [159816]

Beverley Hughes: Information of this nature can be passed to the Home Office's Immigration and Nationality Directorate in Croydon or direct to the nearest Immigration Service office.

Alternatively, a person may pass information on immigration offences anonymously to Crimestoppers, who will forward it to the appropriate Immigration Service office.

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many immigration judicial review applications there have been in the last two years for which figures are available; and of those, how many took *(a)* more than six months and *(b)* more than one year from first application to final conclusion. [160463]

Mr. Lammy: I have been asked to reply.

The number of immigration judicial review applications for the last two years are as follows:

2002

Immigration (asylum)	3,076
Immigration (non-asylum)	164
Total:	3,240

2003

Immigration (asylum)	2,171
Immigration (non-asylum)	144
Total:	2,315

The Administrative Court is unable to provide information on how many of these cases took *(a)* more than six months and *(b)* more than one year without incurring disproportionate costs. However I can give the average waiting times for the judicial review process for 2002 and 2003.

The average waiting time for processing paper applications for permission to apply for judicial review, including the time that cases were stood out pending decisions and subsequent appeals in lead/test cases, was for:

2002

	Weeks
Immigration asylum cases:	9.9
Immigration non asylum cases:	9.6

2003

	Weeks
Immigration asylum cases:	8.5
Immigration non asylum cases:	8.5

Of those that renewed to an oral hearing, the average waiting time from the date of receipt of the application to renew to the renewal decision, including the time that cases were stood out pending decisions and subsequent appeals in lead/test cases, was for:

2002:

	Weeks
Immigration asylum cases:	6.5
Immigration non asylum cases:	6.2

2003

	Weeks
Immigration asylum cases	6.1
Immigration non asylum cases	6.5

Of the 130 cases in 2002 and the 115 cases in 2003 which proceeded to a substantive hearing, the waiting time from date of issue of proceedings to the date of final determination, including the time that cases were stood out pending decisions and subsequent appeals in lead/test cases, was for:

2002

	Weeks
Immigration asylum cases (117 cases):	33.9
Immigration Non asylum cases (13 cases):	54

2003

	Weeks
Immigration asylum cases (103 cases)	36.6
Immigration non-asylum cases (12 cases)	49.6

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers whose applications or appeals are pending are *(a)* single men under 25, *(b)* single women under 25 and *(c)* families with children under 16. [158701]

Beverley Hughes: Data on asylum applicants awaiting an initial decision or the outcome of an appeal hearing, by age or sex are unavailable and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case records.

At the 31 December 2003 there were 24,500[1] asylum cases awaiting an initial decision, 40 per cent. lower than 41,300 at the end of December 2002. As at 31 December 2003, there were an estimated 12,000 appeals lodged with the Home Office, which had not been sent to the Immigration Appellate Authority, 60 per cent. lower than at the end of December 2002. A proportion of appeals lodged with the Home Office do not result in appeal bundles being sent to the IAA. The total asylum work in progress in the IAA as at 31 December 2003, was 27,200 (15,500[1] at the Adjudicator Tier, 7,100[1] applications for permission to appeal to the tribunal, and 4,600[1] tribunal appeals), a slight increase from 27,100 at the end of December 2002.

Information on the age and sex of principal applicants and their dependants relating to asylum applications made in 2002 is published in the Home Office annual statistical bulletin Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2002, copies of which are available in the Library of the House and on the Research Development and Statistics web site http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for asylum were received in 2003 from citizens of the Maldives; and how many were approved. [160669]

Beverley Hughes: In 2003, from nationals of the Maldives there were less than three applications for asylum in the UK, less than three initial decisions (all of which were refusals on non-compliance grounds) and less than three appeal determinations by IAA (all of which were dismissed). Initial decisions may relate to applications received in previous years and appeal determinations may relate to initial decisions in previous years. All data are provisional and exclude dependants.

Information on asylum applications, initial decisions and appeal outcomes is published in quarterly web pages and in the annual statistical bulletin Asylum Statistics United Kingdom, available from the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers have *(a)* entered Wales and *(b)* applied to live in Wales in each year since 1997. [160921]

Beverley Hughes: I regret that the requested information on how many asylum seekers have entered Wales is not available. Asylum applications relate to the UK as a whole. The table gives the available data, on the numbers of those asylum seekers living in Wales who are supported by National Asylum Support Service. (NASS) as at the end of each quarter since December 2001.

As at end:	*In receipt of subsistence only support*	*Supported in NASS accommodation*
December 2001	140	700
March 2002	160	1,020
June 2002	175	1,150
September 2002	180	1,405
December 2002	180	1,585
March 2003	185	1,870
June 2003	175	2,130
September 2003	160	2,350
December 2003	145	2,490

Notes:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

Information on the number of asylum seekers supported by MASS is published in the regular quarterly asylum statistics, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House and from the Home Office's Research Development and Statistics website http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html. The next publication covering the first quarter of 2004 will be available at the end of May.

Information on how many of those supported in MASS accommodation in Wales who had applied to live there is not available.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers who were located in Wales had their *(a)* application to remain and *(b)* appeal rejected in each year since 1997. [161195]

Beverley Hughes: Asylum seekers make applications for refugee status rather than for leave to remain. Applications may result in grants of refugee status, in refusals of refugee status but grants of humanitarian protection, discretionary leave to remain, or in outright refusals. In April 2003 humanitarian protection (HP) and discretionary leave to remain (DL) replaced exceptional leave to remain (ELR). Applications for further leave following Grants of HP and DL are subject to active review.

Information on initial decisions and appeal outcomes relating to asylum applicants located in Wales is unavailable and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The available Information on asylum application, decisions and appeal outcomes is published quarterly. The next publication covering the first quarter of 2004 will be available at the end of May on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the *(a)* accommodation, *(b)* subsistence and *(c)* other costs in respect of asylum seekers resident in Wales in each of the last five years. [161204]

Beverley Hughes: Information relating to accommodation costs is regarded as commercially sensitive and it would not be appropriate to disclose it.

Information relating to subsistence and other costs for asylum seekers resident in Wales is not available on a geographic basis and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many foreign nationals have claimed asylum upon arrival at Northern Ireland *(a)* ports and *(b)* airports in each of the past five years; and from what countries they originated. [161797]

Beverley Hughes: Information on asylum applications lodged in individual regions of the UK is not available and could be obtained at only disproportionate cost.

Information on asylum applications is published quarterly. The next publication covering the second quarter of 2004 will be available at the end of May on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate web site at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. Coleman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average cost to public funds of an appeal to an Asylum Support Adjudicator was in each of the last three years; and what the average length of time for the determination of an appeal brought before an Asylum Support Adjudicator was in each of the last three years. [156807]

Beverley Hughes: The average cost for Asylum Support Adjudicator (ASA) appeals for each of the last three years were as follows:

	Expenditure(£)	*Number of appeals*	*Unit cost (£)*
2000–01	492,000	257	1,914
2001–02	1 million	2,141	467
2002–03	1.2 million	3,813	317

The information for the second part of this question is not available.

Mr. Coleman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by what mechanism his Department is monitoring the impact of section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 on *(a)* rough sleeping and *(b)* overcrowding in London. [156808]

Beverley Hughes: The Homelessness and Housing Support Directorate in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been monitoring the effect of section 55 through regular contact with local authorities, in particular those who have significant rough sleeping problems. Local authorities obtain this information through regular feedback from their outreach teams and other services in their areas. They have been asked to report immediately if anyone is found sleeping rough who has been refused support under Section 55. No evidence has been received that there has been any significant increase in rough sleeping levels due to Section 55.

In London the Refugee Council, Refugee Arrivals Project and Migrant Helpline are grant funded to provide emergency accommodation to asylum seekers awaiting dispersal, including those awaiting decisions under section 55. Such accommodation must comply with all relevant statutory housing regulations.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many abscondees from the Oakington Immigration Reception Centre there were in each of the last 12 months. [145367]

Beverley Hughes: The number of escapes from Oakington Immigration Reception Centre in each month from January to December 2003 (the latest month for which data are available) is shown in the table.

Escapes from Oakington Immigration Reception Centre January to December 2003 [1,2]

	Number of Persons
January	—
February	—
March	2
April	4
May	10
June	5
July	9
August	17
September	19
October	7
November	10
December	1
Total	84

[1] Figures obtained from local management information

[2] Provisional data

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action is taken to remove an asylum seeker once their application has been rejected. [159532]

Beverley Hughes: All asylum applicants have a statutory right of appeal in the event of an adverse decision on their asylum application. If all appeal rights have been exhausted the Immigration Service assess whether that person is removable and, if so, set removal directions. The Immigration Service then makes the necessary arrangements to remove the failed asylum seeker from the United Kingdom.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what mechanisms are used to monitor the impact of section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 on levels of destitution among people seeking asylum. [162014]

Beverley Hughes: The Homelessness and Housing Support Directorate in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been monitoring the effect of section 55 through regular contact with local authorities, in particular those who have significant rough sleeping problems. Local authorities obtain this information through regular feedback from their outreach teams and other services in their areas. They have been asked to report immediately if anyone is found sleeping rough who has been refused support under section 55. No evidence has been received that there has been any significant increase in rough sleeping levels due to Section 55.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list for each *(a)* London borough and *(b)* local authority for each of the last three years the number of properties provided by (i) local authorities, (ii) housing associations and (iii) the private sector to the National Asylum Support Service. [160705]

Beverley Hughes: The information is not available in the format requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many cases the detention of children under immigration law for more than 28 days has been subject to ministerial authorisation since 1 January; and if he will make a statement. [160205]

Beverley Hughes: Management information indicates that on the 26 January 2004 35 children were in detention who were detained solely under Immigration Act powers. Three quarters of those had been in detention for 14 days or less and the remainder had been detained for less than four months. These individuals were all detained as part of families whose detention as a group was considered necessary.

Records show that all children held in detention under immigration law for a period greater than 28 days since 1 January have been subject to ministerial authorisation.

Child Seatbelts

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drivers were *(a)* cautioned, *(b)* charged and *(c)* arrested for carrying child passengers who failed to wear seatbelts in the last year for which figures are available. [162052]

Caroline Flint: Available information held centrally, on police action taken for motoring offences, does not distinguish between passenger and driver seat belt offences, nor whether children are involved.

Detention Centres

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what formal notifications are required when the ownership of a custody or detention centre operated by private companies on behalf of the Government is transferred to another company *(a)* before and *(b)* after transfer. [159861]

Beverley Hughes: The Contract contains a provision requiring the Contractor to notify the Home Office if there is a change of more than 3 per cent. in the ownership of the company. A change of control for the Contractor requires the prior written approval of the Home Office—such approval not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed. If shares are listed in the stock exchange such consent is to be obtained as soon as the Contractor becomes aware of the change of control.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has been consulted over plans to change the ownership of Yarlswood Detention Centre from Group 4 (Falck); and if he will make a statement. [159862]

Beverley Hughes: My right hon. friend, the Home Secretary, has not been consulted. However there are no current plans to change the ownership of the Yarlswood Removal Centre. The contract is currently run by Global Solutions UK Ltd. (GSL) a division of Group 4 Falck.

There have been recent press announcements regarding the potential merger of Group 4 Falck with Securicor. This relates to the division of Group 4 Falck which deals with cash in transit and guarding business, and does not affect the custodial business run by Global Solutions. In conjunction with the merger Group 4 Falck will separate its security business from the GSL business. GSL will be a division of the Group 4 company to be listed as Falck A/S.

As with all public sector contracts, performance will be subject to regular review, and continued provision of the service dependent upon satisfactory performance.

Drug Testing

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his statement of 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 279WH, on drug testing, if he will place a copy of the National Workplace Strategy he referred to in the Library; if he will list the members of the steering group, with their organisation; and if he will list the dates, place and length of the meetings of the steering group referred to. [161185]

Caroline Flint: Yes, a copy of the National Workplace Strategy can be placed in the Library. In total there have been 13 steering group meetings. The first steering group meeting was held on 10 October 2002, then 5 November 2002, 9 December 2002, 27 January 2003, 12 February 2003, 25 March 2003, 29 April 2003, 28 May 2003, 24 June 2003, 22 July 2003, 30 September 2003, 28 October 2003, 25 November 2003 and 27 January 2004.

In general, each meeting lasted two hours and venues changed for each meeting.

Members of the Steering Group include:

1. Richard Ivers, Home Office (Chair)
2. Ciara Shannon, Home Office
3. Robin Burgess, Home Office
4. Jacob Hawkins, Home Office
5. Judith Hind, Department of Health
6. Paul McCormack, Health and Safety Executive
7. Yolande Burgin, Independent Inquiry into Drug Testing at Work
8. Jude Grandison, Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
9. Tom Mellish, Trades Union Congress (TUC)
10. Corrina Langelaan, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
11. Matthew Knowles, British Chambers of Commerce (BCC)
12. John Jolly, KCA (UK) Workplace Services Ltd.
13. Patricia Armstrong, KCA (UK) Workplace Services Ltd.
14. Frank Warburton, Drugscope
15. Sheryl Hobbs, Alcohol Concern
16. Christine Hayhurst, Chartered Management Institute (CMI)
17. Sally Ann Cole, Herts DAT
18. Ian Kirk, Kent DAT
19. John Harmer, Kent DAT
20. Louise Spencer, South Gloucester DAT
21. Joe Gillam, City of London DAT
22. Micky Hewish, New Generation Training Ltd.
23. Ben Wilson, Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD)
24. David Macintosh, London Drugs Policy Forum

Drug Users (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of people in Greater London who take *(a)* heroin, *(b)* marijuana, *(c)* cocaine and *(d)* ecstasy. [162338]

Caroline Flint: In 2001–02 there were 4.6 million 16 to 59-year-olds living in London. Among this population the British Crime Survey estimates prevalence of illicit drug use was 0.1 per cent. for heroin, 14 per cent. for cannabis, 4.2 per cent. for cocaine and 3.5 per cent. for ecstasy.

Environmentally Sustainable Procurement

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what ways environmentally sustainable procurement strategies within the Department have driven innovation in the design and supply of products. [159152]

Fiona Mactaggart: Within the Home Office there are currently no examples of environmentally sustainable procurement strategies that have driven innovation in the design and supply of products. However, it is expected that the forthcoming procurement section of the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate will set Government—wide commitments for embedding sustainable development considerations in departmental procurement strategies. The Department will adopt the considerations in the framework as this will help to encourage environmental innovation in the design and supply of products.

The department supports the introduction of new environmental sustainable products that become available on the market and has adopted a positive stance to environmentally sustainable procurement in the following areas, recycled paper, green electricity, energy use, and recycling of redundant IT hardware.

EU Accession Countries

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he plans to take to prevent an increase in illegal working following the expansion of the European Union on 1 May. [160211]

Beverley Hughes: The free movement of accession nationals will apply across the whole of the EU from May 1. The Government's policy is to welcome accession nationals coming here to work but not simply to claim benefits. This will prevent an increase in illegal working, ensuring that accession nationals who come here to work will do so legally, paying tax and national insurance rather than being forced into the sub-economy.

We have also taken steps to strengthen controls on illegal working. We announced on 23 February that we would introduce a registration scheme for workers from eight of the 10 countries joining the European Union on 1 May this year. We announced on 16 March measures to strengthen the law on the prevention of illegal working, section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.

The reform of section 8 will bring added clarity and security to the document checks employers must carry out on prospective employees to prevent the use of illegal labour, and the Immigration Service will continue to increase intelligence-led enforcement activity against illegal working. The workers registration scheme will allow these nationals access to our labour market in a monitored way, and will encourage those working here illegally to formalise their status and contribute to the formal economy. Employers will be required to check that a person has registered within 30 days of starting their employment.

EU Enlargement

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many accession countries nationals he expects to arrive in the UK between 1 May and 31 December 2004. [157351]

Beverley Hughes: A number of studies have been published which offer estimates of total net flows to the United Kingdom from the accession countries, but these do not of course take account of the measures we announced on 23 February and the steps we are taking to publicise them in the countries most concerned.

The registration scheme announced by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary is designed to monitor the number of A-8 nationals registering as workers and collate information about the nature and location of the jobs they are doing.

Home Security Service

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to increase the resources available to *(a)* the Surveillance Commissioner, *(b)* the Information Commissioner and *(c)* other commissioners involved in supervising the powers and operations of the home security service; and if he will make a statement. [159419]

Mr. Blunkett: There are no plans to increase the resources available to the Chief Surveillance Commissioner, who does not have oversight of the Security Service. Nor are there plans at present to increase the resources available to either the Intelligence Services Commissioner or the Interception of Communications Commissioner for their work relating to the Security Service.

We are increasing the resources available to the Interception Commissioner for his work in overseeing access to communication data by public authorities including the security service. I believe that all are presently, but we keep this position under review.

The Information Commissioner's remit extends to the Security Service in so far as it is a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998. Most of the information held by the Service falls under the national security exemption of that Act or the Freedom of Information Act 2000. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer of Thoroton, informs me that there are currently no plans to provide additional resources to the Information Commissioner.

Immigration Appeals

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the waiting time was between an immigration appeal case being processed by the Appeals Processing Centre and the papers being sent out to the Immigration Appellate Authority on the latest date for which figures are available. [161975]

Beverley Hughes: Data on the average time between an immigration appeal case being processed by the Appeals Processing Centre and the papers being sent out to the Immigration Appellate Authority is unavailable and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case records.

It is planned that performance against PSA targets relating to 2003–04, including those relating to the speed of processing, will be published in due course (once the data are judged sufficiently reliable) in the regular quarterly asylum statistics, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House and from the Home Office's Research Development and Statistics website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Immigration Service

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many UK Immigration Service staff are based in Northern Ireland, broken down by grade; and in what locations they are based. [161796]

Beverley Hughes: A total of 13 staff are based in Northern Ireland. By grade: one Chief Immigration Officer, nine Immigration Officers (one of whom is part-time), two Assistant Immigration Officers and one administrative assistant.

All are based at the UK Immigration Service office at Belfast International airport.

Immigration Tribunals (Training)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what training is given to Home Office presentation officers before they appear before the Immigration Tribunal and Immigration Appeal Tribunal. [156096]

Beverley Hughes: A new Home Office presenting officer initially receives three weeks of classroom-based training. This includes technical, and skills-based elements. This is followed by a period of mentoring by an experienced presenting officer, at the end of which the trainee is ready to represent the Home Office alone in appeals heard before an independent Adjudicator of the Immigration Appellate Authority. Each presenting officer attends a period of consolidation training within three months of completion of initial training.

Senior presenting officers represent the Home Office in cases heard before the Immigration Appeal Tribunal. Where these staff have previously been experienced presenting officers, an analysis of their skills and abilities is conducted to identify specific areas which may require further training. Training will then be tailored to the individual and conducted by experienced mentors. Those with little or no experience of presenting in court follow a training and mentoring programme similar to that provided to presenting officers, although with more focus on the role of the Tribunal, before they appear alone before the Tribunal.

Intelligence and Security Service Tribunals

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints were made to the *(a)* Security Services Tribunal and *(b)* Intelligence Services Tribunal in each of the last five years; and how many complaints to each tribunal were upheld in each year. [161779]

Mr. Blunkett: The information requested is available in the Annual Reports of the Security Service and Intelligence Services Commissioners that have been laid before Parliament. For convenience, the information is set out in the table.

Number of complaints

	Investigatory Powers Tribunal	*Security Service Tribunal*	*Intelligence Services Tribunal*
1999	—	22	5
	11	22	7
2000	(October to December)	(to end September)	(to end September)
2001	91	—	—
2002	130	—	—
2003	Not yet published	—	—

The Security Service and Intelligence Services Tribunals were subsumed into the Investigatory Powers Tribunal in 2000 under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. The figures for the Investigatory Powers Tribunal are not separated out and include complaints on interception of communications. No complaint to the tribunals has been upheld.

Mobile Phones

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many people have been stopped by police for speaking on a mobile phone while driving since 1 September 2003; [162084]

(2) what percentage of people stopped by police for speaking on a mobile phone while driving have been cautioned. [162085]

Caroline Flint: Information on the number of people stopped by the police for speaking on a mobile phone while driving is not collected centrally.

The specific offence of driving while using a hand held mobile phone came into effect on 1 December 2003. Use of a hands free mobile phone is not an offence.

Formal cautions are rarely given for motoring offences. Data on police action (written warnings, fixed penalty notices and court proceedings) for the new offence of driving while using a hand held mobile telephone will not be available until the autumn of 2004.

Official Secrets Act

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to review the operation of the Official Secrets Act 1989. [158642]

Mr. Blunkett: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister gave the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) on 4 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1093W.

Police

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were in *(a)* Avon and Somerset and *(b)* Devon and Cornwall in (i) 1999–2000, (ii) 2000–01, (iii) 2001–02, (iv) 2002–03 and (v) 2003–04. [161871]

Ms Blears: The information requested is set out in the tables.

Table 1—Avon and Somerset Constabulary

Year (as at 31 March)	*Police strength*	*Police (support) staff*
1999–2000	2,934	1,436
2000–01	2,960	1,452
2001–02	3,096	1,611
2002–03	3,149	1,785
2003–04[1]	3,371	Not available

[1] Figure is for 31 December 2003

Table 2— Devon and Cornwall Constabulary

Year (as at 31 March)	*Police strength*	*Police (support) staff*
1999–2000	2,841	1,343
2000–01	2,934	1,453
2001–02	3,053	1,639
2002–03	3,202	1,834
2003–04[1]	3,279	Not available

[1] Figure is for 31 December 2003.

Police Cars

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* marked and *(b)* unmarked police cars there are in England and Wales. [159897]

Ms Blears: This information is not held centrally.

Police Officers

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many policemen there were in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* England as per 1,000 population in each year since 1997. [160480]

Ms Blears: Information on number of officers to 100,000 population has been published annually since 1998 in Home Office Statistical Bulletins "Police Service Strength (England and Wales)". Information in the table is on the basis of published data and includes additional data on the number of male officers to 100,000 population.

Police officer strength per 100,000 population

	All officers		*Male officers*	
	England and Wales	*England*	*England and Wales*	*England*
March 1997	241.3	242.2	205.1	205.5
March 1998	239.9	240.7	202.2	202.5
March 1999	237.2	237.8	199.1	199.3
March 2000	232.6	233.0	194.2	194.3
March 2001	234.3	234.3	194.2	193.9
March 2002	240.4	240.2	197.4	197.0
March 2003[1]	252.3	252.4	205.4	205.3

[1] Uses comparable police strength, which excludes staff on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave.

Representations (MSPs)

Mr. Tom Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many representations he has received from Members of the Scottish Parliament in relation to residents of Glasgow, Cathcart in the last year for which figures are available. [156649]

Caroline Flint: This information is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Royal Pardons

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 250W, whether the figure of one free pardon in 1996 refers to *(a)* both people in the case of John Haase and Paul Bennett and *(b)* one of them. [159972]

Mr. Blunkett: The figure of one free pardon in 1996 did not relate to either John Haase or Paul Bennett. These cases are included in the figure of four given under the heading "Remission" in my answer of 23 February.

Temporary Staff

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff the Department employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Department paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158238]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office does not maintain a central record of agency workers. Agency workers are appointed by agreement with individual units within the Department and the recruitment agencies supplying agency workers.

The information required could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Travel Documents

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the results of the six-month trial into the requirement of carriers to copy passenger travel documents will be available. [159529]

Beverley Hughes: At the end of the six-month trial we will be discussing the results with carriers. A revised Regulatory Impact Assessment will then be published as soon as possible following further consultation with stakeholders.

Work Visas

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work visas were issued to foreign nationals in each year since 1997. [157814]

Beverley Hughes: The number of work permits issued in each of the last five calendar years is set out in the following table:

	Number issued
1999	60,743
2000	88,651
2001	120,823
2002	136,151
2003	145,351

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

"The Impact of Increasing International Competition in Services"

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what conclusions she has drawn from the consultation on her paper "The Impact of Increasing International Competition in Services". [159647]

Ms Hewitt: My Department received over 40 responses to the consultation paper and they are now being analysed. A response to the consultation will be included as part of the Trade and Investment White Paper which we intend to publish in June.

Bankruptcies and Liquidations

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* company compulsory liquidations and *(b)* personal bankruptcies there were in each quarter since 1999, broken down by region. [162214]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Table 1 records the number of company compulsory liquidations in England and Wales by region classified according to groupings of Official Receivers' Offices from 1999 to 2003.

Table 2 records the number of bankruptcies in England and Wales by region classified according to groupings of Official Receivers' Offices from 1999 to 2003.

Table 1: Company Compulsory Liquidations by regions classified according to groupings of Official Receivers Offices 1999–2003

	Annual Totals					*1999*	*1999*	*1999*	*1999*
	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*Q1*	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*
Anglia Region	719	672	708	733	625	148	192	186	193
London	1161	951	911	1147	864	334	263	258	306
Midland Regions	605	664	553	821	617	184	120	173	128
North East Region	599	546	504	480	502	178	159	131	131
North West Region	714	597	586	987	656	194	187	159	174
Public Interest Unit	37	94	150	266	560	—	16	7	14
South East Region	768	769	715	1028	880	184	192	187	205
South West Region	606	632	548	768	531	157	165	139	145
England and Wales Total	5,209	4,925	4,675	6,230	5,235	1,379	1,294	1,240	1,296

	2000 *Q1*	*2000* *Q2*	*2000* *Q3*	*2000* *Q4*	*2001* *Q1*	*2001* *Q2*	*2001* *Q3*	*2001* *Q4*
Anglia Region	181	181	125	185	223	187	164	134
London	220	270	226	235	262	283	173	193
Midland Regions	154	176	178	156	170	145	110	128
North East Region	121	144	163	118	149	150	97	108
North West Region	152	173	128	144	175	149	139	123
Public Interest Unit	27	6	45	16	18	13	34	85
South East Region	186	180	216	187	212	252	112	139
South West Region	169	170	150	143	150	169	111	118
England and Wales Total	1,210	1,300	1,231	1,184	1,359	1,348	940	1,028

	2002 *Q1*	*2002* *Q2*	*2002* *Q3*	*2002* *Q4*	*2003* *Q1*	*2003* *Q2*	*2003* *Q3*	*2003* *Q4*
Anglia Region	191	188	158	196	205	153	149	118
London	217	336	215	379	281	200	174	209
Midland Regions	195	209	205	212	190	141	135	151
North East Region	119	131	106	124	140	136	113	113
North West Region	240	292	250	205	180	153	161	162
Public Interest Unit	81	91	38	56	115	347	40	58
South East Region	211	233	242	342	261	227	200	192
South West Region	154	199	175	240	213	113	104	101
England and Wales Total	1,408	1,679	1,389	1,754	1,585	1,470	1,076	1,104

Table 2: Bankruptcies by regions classified according to groupings of Official Receivers Offices 1999–2003

	Annual Totals					*1999*	*1999*	*1999*	*1999*
	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*Q1*	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*
Anglia Region	3,408	3,144	3,521	3,527	4,191	952	873	851	732
OR London	1,286	1,285	1,427	1,457	1,933	334	368	258	326
Midland Region	3,066	3,187	3,409	3,501	4,187	823	749	782	712
North East Region	3,396	3,838	4,228	4,227	4,581	863	849	886	798
North West Region	3,517	3,640	4,108	4,116	3,868	911	908	921	777
Public Interest Unit	5	6	6	11	12		2	1	2
South East Region	2,931	2,730	2,755	3,052	4,618	805	756	695	675
South West Region	4,002	3,720	4,023	4,401	4,627	1111	1022	971	898
England and Wales Total	21,611	21,550	23,477	24,292	28,017	5,799	5,527	5,365	4,920

	2000 Q1	2000 Q2	2000 Q3	2000 Q4	2001 Q1	2001 Q2	2001 Q3	2001 Q4
Anglia Region	878	744	781	741	961	848	871	841
OR London	338	289	340	318	351	342	361	373
Midland Region	756	840	852	739	904	889	846	770
North East Region	961	982	986	909	1,111	1,130	1,006	981
North West Region	977	885	926	852	1,056	1,084	1,041	927
Public Interest Unit	1	2	0	3	3	1	2	0
South East Region	721	704	658	647	659	765	694	637
South West Region	1035	968	908	809	1,033	1,056	996	938
England and Wales Total	5,667	5,414	5,451	5,018	6,078	6,115	5,817	5,467

	2002 Q1	2002 Q2	2002 Q3	2002 Q4	2003 Q1	2003 Q2	2003 Q3	2003 Q4
Anglia Region	926	860	857	884	1,013	1,003	1,082	1,093
OR London	345	404	355	353	450	463	479	541
Midland Region	824	914	915	848	1,046	1,002	1,105	1,034
North East Region	1,035	1,141	1,098	953	1,082	1,208	1,185	1,106
North West Region	1,036	1,080	1,087	913	1,020	919	1,039	890
Public Interest Unit	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	2
South East Region	121	756	806	763	1,017	1,198	1,236	1,167
South West Region	1,131	1,111	1,129	1,030	1,281	1,152	1,087	1,107
England and Wales Total	6,027	6,269	6,249	5,747	6,912	6,948	7,217	6,940

BBC

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she next expects the Office of Fair Trading to examine the BBC's undertakings on the on-air promotions of BBC published magazines. [157484]

Estelle Morris: I have been asked to reply.

This is a matter for the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). The OFT considers annually its priorities for review of remedial Orders made and undertakings given under the monopoly provisions of the Fair Trading Act 1973. I understand that the OFT currently has no firm date in mind for the review of the BBC undertakings. Any information concerning a possible lack of compliance by the BBC with its undertakings should be passed to the OFT.

Call Centre Services

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to improve the productivity of the call-centre industry in the UK. [161222]

Ms Hewitt: Call centres are used for a wide variety of roles across a broad range of commercial and industrial sectors and the public sector. In the light of this my Department has commissioned research to improve our understanding of the industry and the key factors contributing to its relative competitiveness. The study will help to identify whether there are any actions that can be taken by the industry or Government to address any constraints impacting on its productivity. We expect to publish a report on the study in April.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) whether it is the Government's policy to secure progress in the World Trade talks by eliminating all agricultural export subsidies under the Common Agricultural Policy; and if she will make a statement; [161505]

(2) what assessment she has made of the impact on the World Trade talks of each of the options for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy sugar regime set out in the European Commission's working paper Reforming the European Union's sugar policy. [161506]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government share the European Commission's own view that Option 1, involving extension of the present regime beyond 2006, is not sustainable. Options 2 and 3 both involve reductions in EU prices and production consistent with cuts in tariffs and export refunds which would send a positive message in the context of the current WTO round. The Government are, however, still considering which option represents the best way ahead, taking account of the range of interests involved, including the implications for developing countries.

Connectivity Technologies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans Oftel has to publish statistics on the take-up of connectivity technologies by micro businesses. [157208]

Mr. Timms: Oftel ceased to operate on 28 December. The Office of Communications (Ofcom) is now responsible for the functions formally undertaken by Oftel, operating under the teams of the Office of Communications Act 2002 and the Communications Act 2003. These are, therefore, matters for Ofcom and my officials have asked the Chief Executive of Ofcom to respond directly to the hon. Member. Copies of the Chief Executive's letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Correspondence

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Eddisbury on 5 February, ref 153542. [162640]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The question was replied to on 18 March 2004.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will answer the question from the hon. Member for Hertsmere tabled on 26 February, reference 157862. [161471]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* The question will be answered today.

Electricity Network

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the demand for electricity was on 10 March between 19.00 and 19.30; how much capacity was available; and if she will make a statement. [162202]

Mr. Timms: On 10 March, maximum demand between 19.00 and 19.30 was 49,012 MW. Peak demand for the day was 49,774 MW in the period from 18.30 to 19.00. Throughout these periods, generation capacity available in the market exceeded NGC's Reserve Margin of 3,500 MW.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with National Grid Transco about the level of spare capacity on 10 March between 19.00 and 19.30; and if she will make a statement. [162203]

Mr. Timms: DTI receives system notices from NGC as a matter of course. The system notice issued by NGC on the morning of 10 March was a NISM—Notice of Insufficient System Margin. NISMs are part of normal operations and are issued to signal to the market that additional reserve is desirable. The market responded to the 10 March NISM by making available additional generation capacity.

NGC confirmed to DTI officials that a NISM had been issued, and provided updates during the day as the situation improved until the NISM was cancelled.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions she has had with National Grid Transco about *(a)* the level of maintenance and *(b)* the state of repair of the electricity network; and if she will make a statement. [162204]

Mr. Timms: As part of the regular contacts Ministers and officials have with National Grid Transco, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met with Roger Urwin the company's Chief Executive on 9 February. A range of issues were discussed at the meeting including those arising from the Engineering Inspectorate's investigation following the major power failures last year. Maintenance and repair were factors that were looked at as part of the investigation.

International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions she has had with partner countries on the location of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor facility; and if she will make a statement on the current state of negotiations. [161943]

Ms Hewitt: I attended the 11 March 2004 Competitiveness Council discussion on the location of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor. Europe remains committed to hosting the facility. Discussions between the partners are taking place as to how the site issue might be resolved.

National Minimum Wage

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people are receiving the minimum wage in the Blackpool, North and Fleetwood constituency. [157499]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is not possible to provide estimates specifically for the Blackpool, North and Fleetwood constituency. However, based on the Office for National Statistics' Low Pay data released in 2003, the DTI estimates that around 140,000 people in the North West stood to benefit from the introduction of the national minimum wage in April 1999.

The DTI estimates that between 130,000 and 160,000 people in the North West stood to benefit from the increase in minimum wage rates in October 2003.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many workers in Crosby have benefited from the national minimum wage. [160520]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is not possible to provide estimates specifically for the constituency of Crosby. However, based on the Office for National Statistics' Low Pay data released in 2003, the DTI estimates that around 140,000 people in the North West stood to benefit from the introduction of the national minimum wage in April 1999.

The DTI estimates that between 130,000 and 160,000 people in the North West stood to benefit from the increase in minimum wage rates in October 2003.

Policy Veto

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether her Department is able to exercise a veto in respect of policy proposals put forward by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs relating to the future of Nirex. [162369]

Mr. Timms: Decisions on the future of Nirex will be made on the basis of agreement across Government.

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* solely state-financed and *(b)* public-private partnership and private finance initiative projects for which her Department is responsible have been launched in each region in each of the last 10 years. [160959]

Ms Hewitt: My hon. Friend has not specified what he means by "projects" and my answer has been prepared on the basis that he is referring to construction, refurbishment or infrastructure projects in relation to central departmental administration. The following table sets out the information requested.

Year started	Projects[1]	Status	Region
1994–95	1	Private finance	L&SE
1997–98	1	State financed	L&SE
1998–99	1	PFI	L&SE
1998–99	1	State financed	L&SE
1998–99	1	State financed	L&SE
2001–02	2	State financed	L&SE

[1] Above £2 million capital value.

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much was spent by *(a)* the Government on solely state-financed projects and *(b)* the (i) Government and (ii) private sector on public-private and private finance initiative projects for which her Department is responsible in each of the last 10 years, broken down by region. [160960]

Ms Hewitt: My hon. Friend has not specified what he means by "projects" and my answer has been prepared on the basis that he is referring to construction, refurbishment or infrastructure projects in relation to central departmental administration. The following table sets out the information as requested.

£ million

	Status		
	PFI/PPP		Solely state
Region—L&SE	Private	Public	financed
1994–95	65	—	—
1995–96	—	—	—
1996–97	—	—	—
1997–98	—	4.6	—
1998–99	21.4	8.8	0.7
1999–2000	35.4	0.3	4.2
2000–01	12.1	0.2	1.2
2001–02	6.5	0.7	2.8
2002–03	3.7	0.1	0.6
2003–04	0.3	0.2	0.4

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the Government will assess the merits of creating a new radioactive waste management organisation, based on Nirex, as a statutory corporation. [158643]

Margaret Beckett: I have been asked to reply.

Government has established the independent Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) to recommend the best form of management for the UK's higher activity radioactive waste. We have also announced that we are looking at ways to make Nirex independent of industry and under greater Government control and we will make an announcement on this in due course.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she has taken to implement the recommendations of the G8 Renewable Energy Task Force to work with the other G8 members in expanding domestic renewable energy markets. [162045]

Mr. Timms: The UK is committed towards taking forward the key recommendations of the G8 Renewable Energy Task Force report (G8 RETF)—which is why at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002 we launched an initiative for a global renewable energy and energy efficiency partnership (REEEP). Since then a small secretariat based in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been working with international Governments, business and other organisations including representatives of civil society to develop the REEEP as a means for enabling the delivery of the G8 REFT recommendations. The REEEP aims to trigger a step change in renewable energy markets and bring together stakeholders globally to provide the concerted action needed. For our part, the Government have the target of renewables providing 10 per cent. of our electricity and has put in place the Renewable Obligation as the main means of increasing and development of renewable energy domestically to meet this target. Through the REEEP, the UK is working with others, including various G8 members, to share and build upon good policy, regulatory and financing practise necessary to accelerate the market development of renewable energy.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what grants her Department funds for the installation of *(a)* solar panels and *(b)* other forms of renewable energy for (i) private landlords who rent out their properties and (ii) private households. [162053]

Mr. Timms: Under the Major Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme, private landlords and private households can receive up to 50 per cent. of the cost of installation, subject to price cap. Please see website at www.solarpvgrants.co.uk

Under the Clear Skies initiative private householders can apply for grants for the following technologies; solar water heating, small wind, micro hydro, ground source heat pumps and biomass heating. The level of grant is different for each technology and is also subject to a price cap.

Landlords are not eligible to apply when the property where the installation takes place is let. However public landlords can apply under the community stream of Clear Skies and can receive up to 50 per cent. of the costs.

Further details can be found on the website at www.clear-skies.org

Secondments

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of her Department's senior civil servants went on one week's secondment in *(a)* the private sector and *(b)* a small or medium-sized enterprise between April 2002 and April 2003. [161148]

Ms Hewitt: To date 85 per cent. of my Department's Senior Civil Servants have either completed or have made firm arrangement to undertake a one week attachment with some having completed more than one. Attachments were undertaken at a wide range of organisations of which approximately 80 per cent. were in the private sector. We have not broken this down between large and small or medium-sized enterprises.

I have placed a copy of my Department's publication "Inside Out" in the Libraries of the House. As will be seen most of the case studies included in this are of people going to small or medium-sized enterprises.

Small Businesses

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the visits she has made to firms employing fewer than 50 workers since 1 January 2003. [157862]

Ms Hewitt: I undertake many visits to companies in the course of my Ministerial duties and as a Constituency MP and I have quarterly meetings with the Chair of the Small Business Council. My officials have checked the records and, since 1 January 2003, I have visited two companies with fewer than 50 employees, in my capacity as Secretary of State.

6 June 2003—Voice Connect Groby, Leicestershire

14 November 2003—Inspiration Healthcare, Beaumont Leys, Leicester

Records also show that during the same period, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Minister for Small Business and Enterprise has visited some 21 companies with fewer than 50 employees.

Uzbekistan

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what projects her Department is funding in Uzbekistan. [159847]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: None.

Websites

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost in *(a)* financial and *(b)* other terms was in (i) each financial year since 1997 and (ii) 2003–04 until the latest date for which figures are available of (A) developing and (B) maintaining (1) her Department's website and (2) each website for which her Department is responsible; and how many (C) unique hosts and (D) hits there were in each month for each website in (iii) each financial year since 1997 and (iv) 2003–04 until the latest date for which numbers are available. [155856]

Ms Hewitt: For expenditure on and visitors to the Department's main website, I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow) on 10 April 2002, *Official Report*, column 393W and 24 March 2003, *Official Report*, column 27W. Information on other departmental and NDPB websites is not held centrally and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

(C) The DTI website is hosted by our IT service partner and has been hosted centrally since it was set up. Other external hosts have on occasion been used for individual project or scheme websites. However, there is now a programme of activity to bring all of these sites onto the main DTI hosting platform.

Since Jan 2003, the number of unique visitors and hits to the DTI website have been:

	Unique users	*Hits*
February	322,232	24,108,693
March	375,384	27,198,493
April	367,607	26,314,327
May	357,743	23,398,885
June	324,062	21,707,116
July	337,485	22,941,249
August	321,670	19,980,667
September	345,555	21,335,241
October	377,785	22,611,172
November	408,669	22,036,418
December	307,932	18,619,093

Working Time Directive

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action the Government are taking to ensure that the UK opt out from the EU Working Time Directive is not amended or abolished. [153542]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The opt out is important to the UK as it maintains flexible labour markets and gives choice to individuals to work longer hours if they so wish. I, and my colleagues, are working in Europe to stress the importance of the opt out to both employers and employees and to ensure that key decision makers understand the benefits of an approach which provides protection to workers who do not wish to work long hours without restricting those who wish to make a different choice.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 22 March 2004

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Badgers/Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the most significant causes of mortality in the badger population in the UK are. [158019]

Mr. Bradshaw: Post-weaning starvation accounts for 50–70 per cent. of cub deaths per year, and is the single biggest natural mortality factor among British badgers. Starvation, especially during exceptionally dry years, may also account for a significant proportion of the adult population. Over half of all deaths in the Central Science Laboratory's Woodchester Park study area are attributable to collisions with motor vehicles, and it has been estimated that at least 37,500 badgers, out of an estimated British population of about 350,000, are killed in road traffic accidents each year. Motor vehicles, therefore, are probably the greatest unnatural cause of badger mortality.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 216W, on badgers, whether gassing of badger setts is permitted in the Republic of Ireland. [158086]

Mr. Bradshaw: Gassing is not permitted in the Republic of Ireland.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what numerical targets for the reduction in incidence of TB in cattle have been set for the next 10 years. [157955]

Mr. Bradshaw: This is a subject of our present consultation "Preparing for a new GB Strategy on Bovine Tuberculosis".

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under what circumstances the Government would withdraw *(a)* wholly and *(b)* partly from intervention in the control of bovine TB. [157960]

Mr. Bradshaw: Our thoughts on the rationale for Government intervention on the control of bovine TB are set out in section 4.4 of the consultation document "Preparing for a new GB strategy on bovine tuberculosis" published on 9 February 2004.

We are currently seeking the views of interested parties. Question 4 (page 28) specifically asks for views on the extent of Government intervention in the control of bovine TB.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the requirement for public support for wildlife management schemes in order to reduce the incidence of TB in cattle; and what measures she has considered in order to gain such support. [158012]

Mr. Bradshaw: No such assessment is currently being made.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) at what level TB in badgers creates a significant risk to public health through *(a)* direct and *(b)* indirect transmission; [158014]

(2) at what level the incidence of TB in badgers starts to pose a significant risk to human health through indirect transmission via companion animals. [159073]

Mr. Bradshaw: The risk of direct transmission of bovine tuberculosis from badgers to humans is negligible. However, increased prevalence of TB in badgers would increase the potential for transmission of *Mycobacterium bovis* (the causative organism for bovine TB) to staff of Defra and its executive agencies who handle badger carcases. Full training is given to staff to minimise this risk.

The potential risk of indirect transmission from badger to humans through cattle is also low. This is because of the measures already in place including widespread pasteurisation of milk and regular TB testing of cattle herds.

There is no significant risk of companion animals contracting the disease from badgers. There are sporadic cases of cats contracting the disease in Great Britain. Most of these are thought to result from drinking unpasteurised milk, although there is anecdotal evidence of cats contracting the disease from wildlife.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what her definition is of a sustainable control policy for bovine TB; [158493]

(2) what factors constitute sustainability in the context of a 10-year vision for bovine TB. [157950]

Mr. Bradshaw: A sustainable control policy for bovine TB could be defined as one that takes into account and seeks to balance economic, social, environmental and public health considerations.

How the interests of wider society and the principles of sustainability should be recognised in a 10-year vision for bovine TB is a subject of the current consultation on "Preparing for a new GB strategy on bovine tuberculosis".

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she holds on the existence in countries other than the United Kingdom of suitable accommodation for testing badgers in pursuit of development of a vaccine. [158632]

Mr. Bradshaw: Such facilities exist in the Republic of Ireland to support the Irish badger TB vaccine programme. Defra's Veterinary Laboratories Agency has active research links with staff at the facility.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress is being made in the application of variable number

tandem repeats in subdividing known TB spoligotypes; and what the epidemiological significance of this work is. [158662]

Mr. Bradshaw: "M. bovis" isolates are now being typed by both spoligotyping and variable number tandem repeat techniques. The latter technique has successfully subdivided the most prevalent spoligotype in GB into at least 10 smaller groups. However, it has not divided other spoligotypes to such an extent. This further degree of differentiation, especially when it is found that there is geographical clustering of subgroups, will be useful in disease control by helping elucidate likely sources of infection.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of the badger culling study conducted in the Republic of Ireland; [158663]

(2) what information with relevance to determining policy options for the control of cattle TB in the UK she has obtained from the Republic of Ireland in relation to badger control trials; [159054]

(3) when she expects the results of the badger culling study conducted in the Republic of Ireland to be published. [159131]

Mr. Bradshaw: The results from the Irish badger culling study have not yet been published, although I understand they are expected shortly. We will look closely at the results once published to establish what we can learn and apply to the situation in Great Britain.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the current state of progress of the TB99 survey is; and when she expects to publish results. [158665]

Mr. Bradshaw: An analysis of the pre-Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak dataset is being finalised. An analysis of the 2002 dataset is on-going. Data from 2003 is still being collected (primarily outstanding control reports) and will be subject to analysis later in 2004. 2004 data is now being collected, concentrating on only three triplets within the Randomised Badger Culling Trial. A shorter, more focused epidemiological questionnaire is being prepared for use from 2005. The next report of the Independent Scientific group on Cattle TB will include some results from the analysis of the pre-FMD data and, possibly, the 2002 data.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average cost of *(a)* processing a successful Section 10 application under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and *(b)* supervising its execution was in the last period for which figures are available. [158666]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra staff who process and supervise licences record time to broad work areas. All time spent in connection with the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 by these staff is recorded under a single heading and the time input, which is required to calculate the costs you requested, cannot be accurately separated into processing and supervisory time. Furthermore, no distinction is made between time spent processing successful and unsuccessful applications.

During the financial year 2002–03 the Wildlife Management Team, who carry out the tasks specified in your questions *(a)* and *(b)* , spent a total of 11.5 staff years on work connected with the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. During this period the team determined 852 licence applications. The total staff costs, including travel and subsistence associated with this work were £334,050.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the size of the infective dose of M. bovis to cattle affects the *(a)* incubation period and *(b)* the severity of the disease. [158674]

Mr. Bradshaw: Experimental challenge work indicates that the size of M. bovis challenge affects the speed of disease development and the extent of pathology. It is likely that a similar relationship exists in natural infections.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what protocol has been adopted for the post mortem examination of reactor cattle for the purpose of detecting TB lesions. [158677]

Mr. Bradshaw: Post mortem examination (PME) of reactor cattle is carried out in most cases by the Meat Hygiene Service on behalf of Defra and the Devolved Administrations. Occasionally, examinations are conducted by Veterinary Officers of the State Veterinary Service, depending on locally agreed arrangements.

In any case, the protocols for PME of cattle in which TB is suspected are set out in Schedule 10, Part VIII of the Fresh Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995 (as amended).

Additionally, chapters 4 (Section 8) and 14 (Section F) of the Meat Hygiene Service Operations Manual contain instructions on sampling and reporting requirements.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost to her Department of the pre- and post-movement testing regime will be. [158679]

Mr. Bradshaw: The proposal as set out in the consultation document 'Preparing for a new GB strategy on bovine TB' is for pre-movement testing of cattle moving from one and two year testing herds to other herds. The resource implications of this proposal will be estimated as part of the consultation process which will involve discussions with veterinary and farming interests and Local Government.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what provision she has made for farmers who wish to undertake pre- and post-movement testing who are unable to secure the services of a veterinary surgeon for that purpose within the time frame required. [158680]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is too early in the consultation process to be able to determine whether or not this will be a problem. Detailed discussions will be held with the veterinary profession on resources.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the use of stop snares. [158685]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 protects all wild birds and certain animals from killing and taking. Under Section 11 of the 1981 Act free running snares are permissible provided that the snare is not placed in such a way to allow injury to any animal listed on Schedule 6 of the 1981 Act, which includes badgers. Section 11(3) makes it an offence to set in position, or knowingly cause or permit to set in position, any snare which is of such a nature and so placed as to be calculated to cause bodily injury to any wild animal. The snare must also be inspected at least once every 24 hours, so as to avoid any animal held in the snare suffering unnecessarily through starvation or dehydration. All non-target species must be released from the snare.

Stop snares are not prohibited by the 1981 Act.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is necessary to ensure that potential immigrant populations are free from TB infection before culling TB-infected badgers within a specific locality if such a cull is to have epidemiological value. [158715]

Mr. Bradshaw: Such an approach would be of limited value as M. bovis is endemic in British badgers. It would also be impractical, given the limitations of current live diagnostic tests, and the likelihood that all relevant neighbouring badgers could not be tested.

Birds

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated population was of *(a)* corncrakes, *(b)* woodlarks, *(c)* nightjars, *(d)* skylarks, *(e)* curlews, *(f)* snipe, *(g)* redshanks and *(h)* yellowhammers in Great Britain in 1990; and what the current estimate of the population is. [158011]

Mr. Bradshaw: Curlew, snipe and redshank are amber-listed. All the rest are red-listed. Red list species are those that are Globally Threatened according to IUCN criteria; those whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years; and those that have declined historically and not shown a substantial recent recovery. Amber list species are those with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe, those whose population or range has declined moderately in recent years; those whose population has declined historically but made a substantial recent recovery; rare breeders; and those with internationally important or localised populations. Species that fulfil none of the criteria are green-listed.

The estimation of the various bird populations is given as follows.

	NCC 1990/1988–91 atlas[1]	*Apep 2*[2]
Corncrake	575	589
Snipe	30,000	30,000
Curlew	35,500	No new national estimate available
Redshank	32,500	No new national estimate available
Nightjar	2,000	3,400
Woodlark	220	1,426–1,552
Skylark	2,000,000	1,700,000
Yellowhammer	1,200,000	790,000

[1] Figures from Stroud, D. A., Pienkowski, M. W. and Mudge, G. P. (1990). "Protecting internationally important bird sites: a review of the network of EC Special Protection Areas in Great Britain". Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough. 230 pp except for skylark and yellowhammer which are taken from Gibbons, D. W., Reid, J. B. and Chapman, R. A. 1993. "The new atlas of breeding birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988–1991". T. and A. D. Poyser, London.

[2] Figures from working draft of the Avian Population Estimates Panel.

Pesticides

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of pesticide use on the United Kingdom's bee population; and if she will make a statement. [161483]

Alun Michael: Pesticides are approved on the basis that they will present minimal risk to non-target species, including bees.

Any suspected pesticide poisonings of bees are investigated through Defra's Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WHS). This includes field inquiries, disease assessment of the bees submitted and residue analyses. Results are reported back to the regulatory authorities (the Pesticides Safety Directorate and the Health and Safety Executive) to inform the pesticide approval process.

Annual reports of bee incidents are included in reports of the Environmental Panel of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides entitled "Pesticide Poisoning of animals; investigations of suspected incidents in the United Kingdom". Copies of the latest report of investigations in 2002 are available in the House Library.

TRANSPORT

British Transport Police

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many British Transport Police officers are planned to be based in each British Transport Police force area for the period 2004–05. [162516]

Mr. McNulty: The British Transport Police have not finalised detailed assumptions of manpower numbers at area level for 2004–05. However, BTP expect the proportional split of manpower to be broadly the same as in the current year shown in the table with the exception of London Underground Area which will expand by 100.

Area	*2003–04*
Force Headquarters	131
London North	295
London South	314
London Underground	537
North Eastern	201
North Western	258
Western	279
Scotland	207
On secondment	29
Total	2,251

Disabled Parking

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library an update on progress made since December 2002 on taking forward responses to new representations made by the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee on the blue badge scheme. [162586]

Mr. McNulty: Work is in hand to take forward the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee's recommendations.

Changes need to be made to primary and secondary legislation, further research needs to be carried out and revised guidance issued to local authorities.

Primary Legislation

We have introduced a new clause in the Traffic Management Bill to give enforcement officers a power to inspect blue badges.

We are now looking for a suitable opportunity to remove the reference in law to "Institution" Badges and replace it with the less stigmatising term "organisation" Badges. We are also planning to implement reciprocity agreements with EU and ECMT member states for the recognition of disabled persons' parking badges.

Secondary Legislation

We are already working on these changes, including extending the Scheme to those under two and those with temporary disabilities. We expect to consult on draft regulations later in the year.

Research

We will be embarking on the following research projects in the next few months:

establishing the feasibility of a database of Blue Badge Holders, and looking at the Central London exemption from the Scheme.

Should a database prove feasible then we would aim to legislate in that area in due course.

We will also be carrying out research to examine the case for extending the scheme to certain other groups of disabled people. This will include a wide range of people including those with mental health problems, autism and those who are partially-sighted.

Rail Compensation

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 10 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1488W, on rail compensation, if he will list *(a)* the compensation arrangements for delays and cancellations, of each train operation company's Passenger Charter and *(b)* the date when each of the franchises is due for renewal. [162013]

Mr. McNulty: Passenger's Charters are available from individual train operating companies. The terms and conditions are based on the National Rail Conditions of Carriage. As a minimum, passengers travelling without a season ticket will be entitled to compensation to the value of 20 per cent. of the fare paid for the effective leg where the journey is delayed by more than an hour because of an operator's failure or infrastructure difficulties. Season ticket holders are compensated if performance over the period preceding renewal falls below the published standards.

The following table provides the expiry dates for each franchise:

	Expiry dates for each franchise
Anglia Railways	Ends April 2004
Arriva Trains Northern	Ends Autumn 2004
Arriva Trains Wales c2c	Ends May 2011
Central Trains	Ends April 2006
Chiltern	Ends December 2021
First Great Eastern	Ends April 2004
First Great Western	Ends February 2006
First North Western	Ends Autumn 2004
Gatwick Express	Ends May 2011
GNER	Ends April 2005
Island Line	February 2007
Merseyrail	July 2028
Midland Mainline	April 2008
ScotRail	Renewal planned in Autumn 2004
South Eastern Trains[1]	Planned to end in 2005
Silverlink	Ends October 2004
South Central	Ends December 2009
South West Trains	Ends February 2007
Thames Trains	Ends April 2006
Thameslink	Ends April 2006
TransPennine Express	Ends February 2012[2]
Virgin Crosscountry	Ends March 2012
Virgin West Coast	Ends March 2012
WAGN: West Anglia	Ends April 2004
WAGN: Great Northern	April 2006
Wessex	April 2006

[1] Operated for SRA under section 211 of the Transport Act 2000
[2] With an option to extend for up to a further five years

Railway Bridges (Salisbury)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when railway bridge works at *(a)* Skew Bridge, Salisbury will be completed and *(b)* Broken Cross Bridge, Ford will be started. [162449]

Mr. McNulty: The Highways Agency, who are doing the A36 Skew Bridge improvement, anticipate the completion date for works as being 'late summer 2004'.

The anticipated start date for work on Broken Cross Bridge on the A338 near Ford is early May 2004. The works will comprise skid-resistant surfacing and some kerb realignment. The revised signing was undertaken shortly after the track incursion last November.

Romford Station

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much it cost to maintain Romford railway station in the last financial year for which figures are available; [162459]

(2) how much public funding has been invested in *(a)* Romford and *(b)* Gidea Park railway stations in the last five years. [162460]

Mr. McNulty: The information is not held centrally. The day to day maintenance of railway stations is the responsibility of train operating companies whilst structural maintenance and improvements are the responsibility of Network Rail. No Government grants have been made to either Romford or Guidea Park stations.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Fire Safety

Llew Smith: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission what recent steps have been taken to provide fire safety training for *(a)* hon. Member's, *(b)* their staff and *(c)* officials of the House; and if he will make a statement on current fire safety arrangements in place for (i) the Palace of Westminster and (ii) other buildings of the parliamentary estate. [161920]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: Annual Fire safety training is available for all those who work on the parliamentary estate. This training is offered to Members and their staff but is compulsory for staff of the House. There is a rolling programme of training staff and contractors' personnel permanently employed on the estate. Since September 2003, 1,083 staff of the House have been trained. 72 of these have also been trained as evacuation marshals.

Between June and November 2003 a total of 45 fire safety training sessions were available to Members and their staff; 284 Members and approximately 525 members of their staff were invited to attend. However, only one Member and 30 Members' staff actually took part.

In an effort to improve this very low response from Members and their staff, the Fire Safety Manager has made a special effort to publicise training and encourage attendance, beginning in 1 Parliament Street. So far this month, eight training sessions have been made available to the 60 Members and 80 staff with offices there. Take-up has slightly improved but is still disappointing: four Members and 28 of their staff have been trained. Eight more sessions are being held this week, and the programme will be extended to the other outbuildings as well as the Palace.

Initial fire safety training is given to staff of the House during the Health and Safety element of mandatory induction courses. Discussions are taking place with the aim of including similar training in the induction programme for Members' staff.

Fire evacuation drills in the Palace of Westminster and all other buildings on the parliamentary estate also form part of fire safety training. Drills were conducted in every building on the parliamentary estate during the week beginning 15 December 2003. Everybody in the building at the time of a drill is expected to take part and I would encourage Members to set the example for their staff and evacuate the building during a fire drill.

Fire safety training is essential to the security of everyone on the Parliamentary Estate. I strongly encourage Members and their staff to attend training when they are invited to do so.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Eritrea

Tony Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what help the Department is giving to Eritrea, with particular reference to measures to overcome the effects of recent conflict. [162905]

Hilary Benn: Agreed UK contributions for Eritrea from the beginning of 2003 are:

		£
Food Aid—World Food Programme	From 1 March 2004	1,000,000
Food Aid—World Food Programme	From 26 March 2003	1,000,000
Emergency Nutrition—Dutch Interchurch Aid	From 23 June 2003	550,000
International Committee of the Red Cross	From 15 March 2004	500,000
Emergency Nutrition—UNICEF	From 9 December 2003	500,000
Health and Nutrition—UNICEF	From 1 March 2003	500,000
International Committee of the Red Cross	From 1 March 2003	500,000
Catholic Fund for Overseas Development	From 21 May 2003	200,000

The conflict with Ethiopia is a contributory factor (poor rainfall being another) to food insecurity that has made food aid and specialised health and nutritional Interventions necessary. The support to the ICRC is more specifically targeted on addressing the effects of conflict.

We and others in the international community are continuing to make clear to both parties that the Boundary Commission's decision is final and binding. We are also urging the two parties to engage in dialogue on all the issues separating them. Only through normalising relations can a lasting peace be secured and we therefore call on both Ethiopia and Eritrea to cooperate with the recently-appointed United Nations Special Envoy, Lloyd Axworthy.

Guinea

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make it his policy to raise with the international community the need to deal with the malaria problem in the Nzerekore region in Guinea, with particular reference to the Kouankan and other refugee camps; and if he will make a statement. [162194]

Hilary Benn: UNICEF is taking the lead on action on malaria in refugee camps in Guinea where, according to the UN, malaria is the second biggest cause of death amongst under-5's.

The UNICEF emergency health programme includes provision of insecticide-impregnated bed nets and training in malaria control for 200 health workers. We have recently contributed £500,000 to UNICEF for its emergency health programme in Guinea.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Anti-competitive Practices

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations have been received regarding anti-competitive practices associated with the distribution of bounty bags to new mothers through NHS facilities; and if she will make a statement. [160982]

Dr. Ladyman: I have been asked to reply.

No representations have been received regarding anti-competitive practices associated with the distribution of bounty packs to new mothers through National Health Service facilities.

BNFL American Assets

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the maximum liability to the public purse arising from BNFL's United States assets. [162368]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The performance of BNFL's US businesses has been detailed in successive BNFL Annual Reports. The department is now working with the company to minimise its exposure to further risks in the US clean-up market. Until that process is complete it would be premature to speculate on any residual liability that there might be.

Call Centres

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of UK call centre employees working for employers who are using VAT grouping arrangements to avoid the ultimate client incurring irrecoverable VAT charges on call centre services. [161467]

Ms Hewitt: My Department has made no estimate of the number of UK call centre employees working for employers who are using VAT grouping arrangements. VAT policy is a matter for Treasury Ministers.

Defence Knowledge Transfer

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on defence knowledge transfer to civil manufacturing. [157714]

Mr. Ingram: The Government is committed to assisting industry to maintain and increase its competitiveness for the wider economic benefits to this country. Transfer of defence knowledge to civil manufacturing is a key facet of this commitment.

The MOD has a key role in delivering the Government's agenda on promoting wealth creation through the science base and has been active in technology transfer. Changes in the way Science and Technology is funded following the privatisation of QinetiQ will result in defence research investment reaching commercial markets. In addition, The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) is involved with a number of joint ventures which contribute to knowledge and technology transfer. The setting up of the Defence Diversification Agency in 1998 also helped work towards greater two-way technology transfer between the defence and civil sectors.

Getting mature technologies in to the supplier base at the right time to support our acquisition plans is one of the key outputs of the way the MOD manages its research programme.

Departmental Communications

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff are employed in the Department to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158162]

Ms Hewitt: On 1 March 2004 there were 47 members of the Government Information and Communications Service (GICS) working in the DTI Strategy Unit's Communications Directorate. The figure includes 19 Press Officers. Other GICS staff worked in Marketing, Internal Communications, Strategic Communications and internet/new media teams.

The Special Advisers' Code of Conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister, including communications activity.

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total expenditure on communications for her Department has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158209]

Ms Hewitt: The 2003–04 running costs of the DTI Strategy Unit's Communications Directorate is expected to be £2.9 million. The detailed information is not held in the form requested and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The Special Advisers' Code of Conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister. This includes communications activity. Details of the costs of Special Advisers are given on an annual basis. Information for the financial year 2003–04 will be published in due course.

Fair Trade Products

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to encourage Government departments and agencies to offer fair trade products in their restaurants and cafeterias. [162082]

Ms Hewitt: It is government policy to promote Fairtrade products, against the background of the need to obtain best value for money, the EC procurement rules and the Department's objectives. Within these guidelines the Department and its Agencies are committed to supporting ethical trading wherever possible.

Since September 2002, I have ensured that Fairtrade tea and coffee are available throughout DTI HQ, and many of my Cabinet colleagues have done likewise. I am pleased to announce that Government departmental restaurants and cafeterias are continually adding to their range of Fairtrade products. In addition to Fairtrade coffee and tea, staff, visitors, and ministers can now enjoy Fairtrade cereal and chocolate bars, and Fairtrade hot chocolate, sweetened with Fairtrade sugar.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to encourage more companies to participate in fair trade practices. [162083]

Ms Hewitt: The Government has worked hard to encourage companies to participate in fair trade practices. The Government, through DFID, has provided £0.5 million in support for UK development awareness and education campaigns centred around fair trade over the past two years. This includes £120,000 to the media campaigns of the Fairtrade Foundation to raise both business and consumer awareness of how fair trade benefits poor producers and to increase the exposure of products carrying the Fairtrade mark.

Government support for fair trade is part of a wider programme designed to mainstream social responsible business practices in the corporate sector. The Government, through DfID, funds the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI); £1.3 million over the last three years. The ETI, an alliance of Trade Unions, NGOs and private companies, seeks to promote good practices in the implementation of labour related codes of conduct throughout the supply chain.

Miners' Compensation

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how long on average former miners *(a)* represented and *(b)* not represented by a trade union have waited for their respiratory claims to be resolved. [161339]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department does not hold these figures.

Post Office Closures

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will instruct Post Office Ltd. to publish a profile of the select teams of personnel involved in walking between each sub-post office proposed for closure in the Wakefield area plan and the named alternative branch indicating how many of the personnel were *(a)* wheelchair users, *(b)* physically disabled, *(c)* aged between 65 to 75 years, *(d)* aged between 75 to 85 years, *(e)* aged over 90 years and *(f)* wheeling pushchairs and accompanied by young children. [162383]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* No. Post Office Ltd. personnel involved in drawing up closure proposals under the urban reinvention programme undertake a detailed on the ground study assessment of the accessibility of the alternative offices identified as the main receiving branches and their facilities for the disabled. This assessment includes the nature of the terrain between the branches, the distance of the journey on foot, including how busy the roads are, where there are pedestrian crossings, traffic lights or underpasses where these need to be crossed. Access by public transport, predominantly by bus, is also checked giving route numbers and distance of stops from the closing and receiving branches. Availability of parking is also checked. The offices in Wakefield scheduled to close have an alternative office within 0.5–0.6 miles accessible by bus.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she takes to monitor the factual accuracy of information upon which proposals to close sub-post offices are based; what steps have been taken to evaluate the factual accuracy of the Post Office area plan for Wakefield; and if she will make a statement. [162379]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The public consultation process enables any factual inaccuracies in the proposals to be identified and Postwatch closely monitors every individual closure proposal including factual accuracy of information from a consumer perspective.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment has been made of the change in the number of road journeys consequent on the proposal to close sub-post offices within the Wakefield metropolitan district; [162380]

(2) what assessment has been made of the health and social care implications of the proposal to close sub-post offices within the Wakefield metropolitan district; [162381]

(3) what steps were taken during the development of the Post Office area plan for Wakefield to assess the consequences of the plan for levels of road accidents and fatalities involving pedestrians. [162382]

Mr. Timms *[holding answers 18 March 2004]:* These are operational matters for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to respond direct to my hon. Friend.

Postwatch Scotland

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in how many cases Postwatch Scotland has lodged an objection to a proposed post office closure in the context of the Urban Reinvention Programme; and in how many cases Postwatch Scotland has withdrawn such an objection. [161459]

Mr. Timms: These are operational matters for Postwatch and I have asked the Chairman of Postwatch Scotland to respond direct to the hon. Member.

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* new and

(b) safeguarded jobs are directly attributable to each regional development agency for each year since their inception. [157201]

Jacqui Smith: When England's Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were established in April 1999, they inherited eleven different programmes, each with their own budgets, objectives and output definitions. So the figures for the three years 1999–2000 to 2001–2002 were reported using a number of different definitions. The following table shows the total number of jobs directly attributable to RDA activity for each of the first three years since their inception. The figures are not split between new and safeguarded jobs.

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Advantage West Midlands	25,305	12,792	8,587
East of England Development Agency	2,615	3,019	1,546
East Midlands Development Agency	10,092	11,243	9,321
London Development Agency[1]	N/a	N/a	13,007
Northwest Development Agency	33,340	34, 685	29,523
ONE NorthEast	11,695	15,369	18,786
South East England Development Agency	8,310	16,476	3,063
South West of England Regional Development Agency	3,547	21,766	17,965
Yorkshire Forward	15,720	21,282	14,788

The basis for reporting outputs changed with the introduction of the Single Programme budget in April 2002, when a common targetry framework was introduced, together with a set of agreed outputs for each RDA and common output definitions. Target levels are set through the corporate planning process and each RDA has the flexibility to set targets within the common framework based on the priorities for its region. The following table shows the total number of jobs directly attributable to RDA activity in 2002–03 against the Corporate Plan targets. This information has been previously published -I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made on 7 July 2003. The figures are not split between new and safeguarded jobs.

	2002–2003 Target	*2002–2003 Achievement*
Advantage West Midlands	13,626	13,416
East of England Development Agency	953	2,177
East Midlands Development Agency	5,150	2,940
London Development Agency	14,450	13,873
Northwest Development Agency	14,532	16,764
ONE NorthEast	7,449	7,774
South East England Development Agency	2,066	3,107
South West of England Regional Development Agency	6,450	6,508
Yorkshire Forward	10,500	10,888

All of the above information is taken from each RDA's Annual Report and Accounts, which the eight RDAs outside London are required to produce, and are laid in Parliament. Copies are available in the Libraries of the House. The London Development Agency also produces an Annual Report and Accounts, which is not required to be laid in Parliament, but is available on the LDA's website.

[1] The London Development Agency was not established until July 2000 and the LDA first reported outputs in 2001–2002.

Regulations

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many regulations were *(a)* removed and *(b)* reformed pursuant to the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994 in each year since 1994; and if she will make a statement. [160142]

Nigel Griffiths: 52 Deregulation Orders were made under the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act between 1994 and 2001, when the Act was superseded by the Regulatory Reform Act. Each of the Orders made under the 1994 Act amended an individual Act of Parliament to remove regulatory burdens.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 3 March, *Official Report*, columns 963–64W, on business regulation, what the findings were of the 2002 Small Business Service research into the impact of the Climate Change Levy on small businesses; and what specific measures were introduced to reduce the regulatory burden for small businesses as a result. [161549]

Nigel Griffiths: The reports overall conclusion was as follows:

'In general the impact of the CCL of SMEs does not appear to be significant, compared with other general business concerns.'

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much was spent on regulatory issues emanating from the EU in each year between 1997 and 2007; and how much full-time equivalent staff time in her Department was spent on EU regulations in each year. [161516]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department does not record the cost of or the number of staff required for negotiating and implementing regulatory issues emanating from Europe. The length of negotiation and implementation varies enormously from policy to policy and it would be hard to obtain a meaningful figure. Collating such figures would incur a disproportionate cost.

Renewable Energy

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what mechanisms are in place to ensure that electricity supply companies purporting to supply set percentages from renewable sources actually do so. [162370]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* Licensed electricity suppliers are required to provide Ofgem with evidence of their compliance with the Renewables Obligation by a specified date after the end of each Obligation period.

Ofgem implements a number of measures to assess the accuracy of the information received.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment she has made of the ability of renewable energy sources to meet an increase in demand for electricity over the next decade. [161812]

Mr. Timms: All estimates of the ability of renewable sources to meet a part of future supply take account of predicted changes in future energy demand.

The target of 10 per cent. electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2010 was supported by detailed modelling for the Energy White Paper. This accounted for a future increase in electricity consumption of approximately 4.3 per cent. from 2002, on the basis of increased demand but also increased energy efficiency. Therefore the target is based upon 10 per cent. of predicted consumption in 2010 rather than 10 per cent. of consumption in 2002.

Beyond this it is our aspiration that 20 per cent. of total electricity consumption will come from renewable sources by 2020. The recently completed 'Renewables Innovation Review' provided assessments of the potential future contributions of various technologies. This will help inform the review of our primary support mechanism, the 'Renewables Obligation', in 2005–06 to ensure that our targets are met, accounting for changes in future energy demand.

Science/Technology (Promotion)

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in joint working with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the promotion of UK science, engineering and technology. [159007]

Ms Hewitt: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Middlesborough South and East Cleveland (Dr. Kumar) on 20 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 1443W.

Subsequently, my Department's Innovation Report has been published and I am confident that the measures we have set out in Chapter 7, 'Global Links', of the Report will lead to wider co-ordination on the international innovation agenda across Government which builds on the work already undertaken by the Chief Scientific Adviser's Committee (CSAIC) chaired by the Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir David King, and the International Science Technology Trade and Investment Committee (ISTTIC) chaired by the UKTI Chief Executive, Sir Stephen Brown.

The report also identifies specific initiatives, such as 'Global Watch', which will be expanded to help raise the international competitiveness of UK industry and commerce.

Small Businesses

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will place a copy of the Small Business Survey 2003 in the Library. [161149]

Nigel Griffiths: A copy of the final report of the Small Business Survey 2003 will be placed in the Libraries of the House, when the report is published by the Small Business Service in summer 2004.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many proposed regulations have been aborted as a result of the Small Firms Impact Test; [161176]

(2) if she will list the proposed regulations which have been aborted as a result of the Small Firms Impact Test. [161513]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department does not keep records on the reasons for a policy proposal not proceeding.

Vibration White Finger

Mr. David: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress is being made to resolve outstanding vibration white finger claims for compensation from former employees of British Coal who have suffered from pre-1975 exposure to vibratory tools and who were employed in a Group 3 occupation. [161065]

Nigel Griffiths: There have been lengthy discussions, between the Department and the Claimants Solicitors Group, in an attempt to resolve the areas of pre 1975 exposure to vibratory tools and the treatment of low levels of exposure (which falls below the level identified by the Court of Appeal as that which makes British Coal liable).

Both the Department and the CSG accept that further discussions are unlikely to settle the issues and have invited the Court to rule on these areas. The court hearing has been listed for 15 and 16 April 2004.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Sexual Offences Act

11. **Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what additional resources have been allocated to police forces to bring prosecutions for internet grooming under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. [162529]

Paul Goggins: The grooming offence in section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 will enable the authorities to intervene before the sexual abuse of a child takes place.

Between 2000–01 and 2004–05 the policing provision for England and Wales increased by £2.3 billion. While child protection is a priority within the National Policing Plan it is for the police themselves to decide how this additional money is allocated.

Identity Cards

12. **Ross Cranston:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effects of a national identity card scheme on the problem of illegal working. [162530]

Mr. Blunkett: Identity cards will provide a clear indication of a person's identity and in the case of foreign nationals their entitlement to work. They will give the vast majority of legitimate employers a simpler and more reliable way of complying with the law. Cards will also make enforcement activity against unscrupulous employers more effective.

Anti-social Behaviour

13. **Jane Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans his Department has to support the gating of alleys to tackle anti-social behaviour. [162531]

Fiona Mactaggart: On 5 March we launched "Operation Gate it"—a new fund to tackle anti-social behaviour in alleyways. This fund is in partnership with Groundwork UK and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. It will run from April this year to March 2006.

Gating is just one of many solutions to these problems however and will not always be appropriate. So, through "Gate It", local communities will be able to bid for lighting/landscaping/CCTV funding—as well as gates.

Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act

15. **Mr. Gerrard:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the operation of section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. [162533]

Beverley Hughes: Section 55 of the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 prevents the National Asylum Support Service from providing support to applicants who do not apply for asylum as soon as reasonably practicable after their arrival in the UK. It is designed to tackle abuse of the asylum system and is one of a package of measures which has contributed to the substantial reduction in asylum claims.

Street Crime (Castle Point)

16. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will visit Canvey Island to discuss levels of street crime. [162534]

Ms Blears: The Home Secretary has no immediate plans to do so.

Internet Pornography

18. **Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he is taking to tackle websites hosted outside the UK which contain child pornography and other images of abuse. [162536]

Paul Goggins: UK law enforcement agencies make every effort to take down sites hosting illegal images, prosecute those responsible, and disrupt supporting functions such as payment mechanisms.

The Government continue to discuss these issues with our international partners, including during the Home Secretary's recent visit to the US.

Immigration (Eastern Europe)

20. **Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many immigrants came to the UK from Eastern Europe in the last 12 months. [162538]

Beverley Hughes: Estimates of total international migration produced by the Office for National Statistics are compiled from a range of survey and administrative sources. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is unable to provide a reliable estimate of the immigration of Eastern European nationals to the UK for the latest year for which data are available (2002), as the low sample sizes in the main survey source (the International Passenger Survey) result in such an estimate being subject to a high degree of error. For the last three years, 2000–02, combined it is estimated that 49,900 Eastern European citizens migrated to the UK.

Police (CBRN Training)

21. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers, and from how many constabularies, have been trained at the police Nuclear, Chemical, Biological and Radiological Establishment at Winterbourne Gunner. [162540]

Ms Blears: Over 5,000 UK police officers nationally have now received training in responding to a CBRN incident. The majority of these have been trained by the Police National CBRN Centre. The numbers of officers trained consist of police personnel from all UK police forces, including the Metropolitan Police who have their own training facility.

Prisons

22. **Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what meetings he has had with Prison Service managers to discuss the situation in prisons. [162541]

Paul Goggins: As Minister for Correctional Services I meet with Prison Service managers on a very regular basis and discuss a wide range of issues relating to the situation in prisons.

Asylum Seekers

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers from Zimbabwe were refused asylum in the UK *(a)* in 2002–03 and *(b)* since April 2003; and how many failed asylum seekers have been deported to Zimbabwe in each period. [157437]

Beverley Hughes: The following table shows the number of asylum applications and initial decisions for nationals of Zimbabwe (excluding dependants) in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* for each month between April 2003 and December 2003, the latest period for which published data are available. Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications received in the same period.

Applications received for asylum in the United Kingdom, excluding dependants, and initial decisions[1,2,3], nationals of Zimbabwe
Principal applicants

		Initial decisions considered under normal procedures					
	Applications received	*Total initial decisions*	*Grants of asylum*	*Grants of ELR*	*Grants of HP*	*Grants of DL*	*Total refusals*
2002–03	7,220	6,405	2,385	85	n/a	n/a	3,930
April 2003	335	310	90	n/a	—	5	215
May 2003	230	430	95	n/a	5	*	330
June 2003	250	405	90	n/a	—	*	315
July 2003	285	285	50	n/a	—	5	230
August 2003	185	270	35	n/a	—	*	235
September 2003	240	345	50	n/a	—	5	290
October 2003	265	335	55	n/a	—	—	280
November 2003	220	360	40	n/a	—	5	320
December 2003	200	250	25	n/a	—	*	230

[1] Figures are provisional and rounded to the nearest five, with * = 1 or 2.
[2] Decision figures do not necessarily relate to applications received in the same period.
[3] Information is of initial determination decisions, excluding the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions.

The following table shows the available data, for outcomes of adjudicator appeals at the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA) for nationals of Zimbabwe in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* for each month between April 2003 and December 2003, the latest period for which published data is available. Appeals may relate to initial decisions made in earlier periods. Corresponding information on appeals to the Immigration Appellate Tribunal (IAT) relating to Zimbabwean nationals (including appeals made by the Secretary of State) is not available and could be produced only at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case files.

Outcome of appeals[1,2] determined by adjudicators of the Immigration Appellate Authority, excluding dependants, nationals of Zimbabwe
Number of principal appellants

	Appeals determined by adjudicators						
		Allowed		*Dismissed*		*Withdrawn*	
	Total determined	*Total*	*As percentage of determined*	*Total*	*As percentage of determined*	*Total*	*As percentage of determined*
2002–03	2,785	1,010	36	1,635	59	140	5
April 2003	380	115	31	250	66	10	3
May 2003	405	115	29	265	65	25	6
June 2003	315	95	30	205	64	20	6
July 2003	405	145	36	245	60	15	4
August 2003	305	70	23	220	72	15	5
September 2003	400	105	26	280	70	15	4
October 2003	375	105	28	260	69	15	3
November 2003	345	80	23	250	72	15	5
December 2003	330	80	24	245	74	10	2

[1] Provisional figures rounded to nearest five (except percentages), with '*' = 1 or 2. Figures may not add up due to independent rounding. Data on appeal outcomes by nationality in this table are derived from Immigration and Nationality Directorate electronic sources.
[2] Figures include cases withdrawn by the Home Office, as well as the appellant.

Deportations are a specific subset of removals alongside persons subject to administrative removal, removal due to illegal entry action or those refused entry at port and subsequently removed.

Estimates of the number of nationals of Zimbabwe who had sought asylum at some stage and who were removed from the UK between April 2002 and September 2003 (the latest date for which figures are available) are shown in the following table. These figures include persons departing 'voluntarily' after the initiation of enforcement action against them, persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Returns Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration and removals to a safe third country.

Removals and voluntary[1] departures of principal asylum applicants (excluding dependants), nationals of Zimbabwe[2,3,4]

	Number
2002–03	100
April to June 2003	15
July to September 2003	20

[1] Includes persons departing "voluntarily" after enforcement action had been initiated against them, persons leaving under Assisted voluntary return programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration, and removals on safe third country grounds.
[2] Figures rounded to the nearest five and may not sum to total due to rounding.
[3] Data have been estimated due to data quality issues.
[4] Provisional figures.

Removal of failed asylum seekers to Zimbabwe was suspended on 15 January 2002; we did not at the time consider that it was unsafe to return them but in view of the rapidly changing circumstances it was appropriate not to enforce returns. The suspension has been maintained since that date and although we still consider it would not be unsafe to return failed asylum seekers there, enforced returns would be inappropriate in the wider context of the Government's position on Zimbabwe. An exception to the suspension policy in cases where a failed asylum seeker has a serious criminal record or their presence in the United Kingdom is not otherwise conducive to the public good was announced on 5 February 2004. In such circumstances enforced return to Zimbabwe would be considered by Ministers on a case by case basis.

Information on asylum applications, initial decisions, appeals and removals are published quarterly. The current publication covering the fourth quarter of 2003, and provisional 2003 data, are available on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html. Data on the nationality of removals are published a quarter in arrears. Data for the final quarter of 2003 will be published at the end of May.

Departmental Communications

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff are employed in the Department to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158170]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office employs four Special Advisers. The Special Advisers' Code of Conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister. This includes communications activity.

Details of other staff employed to work in the communications field are as follows:

	Government Information and Communication Service staff	*Press Officers*	*Others*
Communication Directorate	[1]86	1	[2]167
Research, Development and Statistics Directorate	0	0	7
Total	86	1	174

[1] Press Officers are also GICS members and have been included in the Government Information Communication Service staff figure. There is only one non-GICS member of staff on secondment to the Press Office.
[2] Includes six staff employed in policy units and 76 in customer communications.

Details of the numbers of staff employed in the communication field in the wider Home Office are not held centrally and could not be collected without disproportionate cost.

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total expenditure on communications for the Department has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communications Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers.(ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158202]

Fiona Mactaggart: Expenditure on communications in 2003–04 within the Home Office's Communication and Research, Development and Statistics Directorates is estimated as follows:

£

	Government Information and Communication Service staff	*Press Officers*	*Other*
Communication Directorate	3,427	25,000	[1]4,031,000
Research Development and Statistics Directorate	0	0	111,000
Total	3,427	25,000	4,142,000

[1] Includes costs of six staff employed in policy units and 76 in customer communications.

Details of expenditure on communications beyond these two directorates are not held centrally and could not be collected without disproportionate cost.

The Home Office employs four Special Advisers. Details of the costs of Special Advisers are given on an annual basis. Information for the financial year 20003–04 will be published in due course.

Youth Justice Board

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints his Department has received about the operation of the Youth Justice Board since its inception. [158840]

Paul Goggins: I am not aware of any complaints having been received about the operation of the Youth Justice Board since its inception.

Departmental Scientific Adviser

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has a chief scientific adviser. [162476]

Fiona Mactaggart: Professor Paul Wiles was appointed Home Office Chief Scientific Adviser in November 2002 and reports directly to the Permanent Secretary.

The key functions of the Chief Scientific Officer are:

To be the senior adviser to Ministers and the Group Executive Board on all matters concerning science.

To provide assurance that the overall scientific work of the Department is managed so that it serves the Home Office's purpose, aims and delivery.

To ensure that the Department makes appropriate use of the external research community: including mechanisms to ensure that all the scientific work for, or by the Department is of appropriate quality and relevance.

To ensure that all matters concerning the professional skills, development and training of staff occupying specialist scientific grades are properly conducted.

To represent the Department on cross-Whitehall scientific groups, such as the Chief Scientific Advisers Committee.

In addition, the Police Scientific Development Branch and the Research, Development and Statistics Directorate are line managed by the Chief Scientific Adviser.

Drinking Water

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what his Department's policy is on the provision of drinking water in HM young offenders institutions for *(a)* staff and *(b)* inmates; and if he will make a statement; [161354]

(2) what his Department's policy is on the provision of drinking water in HM Prisons for *(a)* staff and *(b)* inmates; and if he will make a statement. [161359]

Paul Goggins: All prison establishments have facilities to provide drinking water from the mains supply. Although access points may vary in establishments, drinking water is generally available in accommodation wings and other prisoner areas such as healthcare, gym, workshops and visits. Staff working in these areas would also have access to drinking water as well as having provision in staff areas such as messes and changing areas.

Policy on access to drinking water facilities and the provision of additional facilities (for example water coolers for staff) is a matter for individual governing governors.

Firearms Legislation

Mr. Martin Salter To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he will publish the consultation paper for the Home Office Review of firearms legislation; [161761]

(2) what the purpose is of his Department's review of firearms legislation; [161762]

(3) how long will be allowed for the consultation on his Department's review of firearms legislation; [161763]

(4) what representations he has received regarding the current law on firearms in the last three months; [161764]

(5) which stakeholder organisations he plans to meet to discuss the review of firearms legislation; [161768]

(6) what discussions he has had with the police regarding the Department's review of firearms legislation; [161769]

(7) what principles guide the Home Office's relations with stakeholders with regard to firearms legislation; [161771]

(8) with which organisations he has discussed the Home Office review of firearms legislation. [161772]

Caroline Flint: We will be publishing a consultation paper shortly as the first step in a comprehensive review of our firearms controls to ensure they meet current needs and reduce the risk of guns getting into the wrong hands. We believe that any system of regulation must be robust, efficient and effective but should not place unnecessary burdens on those who administer and enforce the law or who possess guns for reasons allowed by the law.

In drawing up the consultation paper there have been no formal discussions with interested parties although it will seek to reflect a range of issues which have been raised in the past by representative bodies and in public correspondence. We are interested in receiving views from everybody with an interest in the future regulation of firearms and want an open debate of the issues. A period of three months will be allowed for responses.

Heroin

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to increase the penalties for *(a)* possession and *(b)* use of heroin. [162180]

Caroline Flint: There are no current plans to amend the penalties for the possession of heroin. While the possession of heroin is a criminal offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, use or consumption of the drug is not.

Illegal Immigration

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to prevent people falsely claiming to be students for immigration purposes from entering the UK. [162532]

Beverley Hughes: Overseas nationals seeking to enter the UK must prove that they meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules as students. Visa officers and immigration officers are supported in making decisions by intelligence networks. In particular, a joint initiative between the home office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office/UKvisas has seen special risk assessment units set up to increase our ability to identify and tackle all forms of visa abuse at key British Embassies.

Internet Fraud

Phil Sawford: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he is taking to combat fraud on the internet. [162537]

Caroline Flint: The Home Office works with the police and industry to tackle fraud and other online crime.

In January we launched a website to combat fraud over the internet and last October, together with the British Bankers' Association and the Association of Payment and Card Services we issued advice to customers on how to avoid falling victim to online fraudsters.

Management Consultants

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost to his Department of using management consultants has been in each of the last five years. [148024]

Fiona Mactaggart: The available information held by the Home Office on the cost of using external consultants in each of the financial years; 1998–99, 1999–2000, 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 is as follows:

£

Financial year	*Cost of using external consultants*
1998–99	4,588,445
1999–2000	10,302,672
2000–01	27,877,286
2001–02	21,147,058
2002–03	n/a

We do not hold information on the cost to the Home Office of using external consultants for 2002–03 and to obtain this information would incur disproportionate cost.

It is not possible to detail the benefits accrued by the Department to expenditure in a specific year but I am able to summarise the benefits of using external consultants in this period.

The use of external consultants has helped the Department to successfully deliver projects across the office, which has resulted in improved business processes. A further benefit has been the transfer of specialist skills and knowledge to staff. The Department has also benefited from strategic business advice, which has shaped the strategy for combining the separate personnel, finance and procurement projects into an integrated project (Adelphi). This work has informed the development of business change that Adelphi is implementing across the Department and provide accurate management information.

The increase in expenditure on external consultancy in 2000–01 was primarily, due to costs incurred on the Home Office modernisation programme, in particular Information Technology (IT) related consultancy.

The high spend figures for 2001–02 includes the cost of setting up the National Probation Directorate and various consultancies on IT business change.

The main areas of expenditure and the benefits that have accrued are summarised as follows:

Within the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) the use of management consultants has done much to improve business processes. Examples of projects, which could not have been successfully delivered without the project management experience and skills provided by consultants, are:

New Detection technology, deployed in Calais at the end of 2002 and subsequently at other locations;

The introduction of the Application Registration Card;

Support to the improvement of removal performance;

Evaluation of the Fast Track Appeals Process, and subsequent assistance in improving the process.

Criminal Justice IT has utilised consultants across all Directorates since start up. This has helped the unit to achieve a position of excellence in the IT delivery area quickly. The benefits of this position are already being felt across the Criminal Justice System as a whole, as well as within the individual strategic programmes. It has also resulted in a knowledge transfer process being put in place as consultants are replaced by civil servants.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. David: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the timetable is for the establishment of the National Offender Management Service. [162535]

Paul Goggins: An implementation team has been established and preparations for a detailed programme of work is under way.

The National Offender Management Service will come into being from 1 June 2004 and it is anticipated that all the necessary changes will have been implemented within five years.

Police Cells

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether HM Chief Inspector of Prisons has the authority to carry out inspections of police cells when they are being used to hold prisoners under Operation Safeguard. [160698]

Paul Goggins: Operation Safeguard is currently not active. Any prisoner held in police cells is held under the 1980 Imprisonment (Temporary Provisions) Act. In line with this act, prisoners held in police cells are in the custody of the Chief Police Officer of the region and not subject to prison rules or the Prison Act 1952. The Chief Police Officer will therefore be responsible for the welfare of any prisoners. The Chief Inspector of Prisons could, however, at the invitation of the Chief Police Officer concerned attend at a police station and comment on the conditions in which such prisoners are kept and their treatment.

Prisoners

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men were being held in prison on 11 March; how many prisoners were released on early release on 11 March; how many prisoners were eligible for early release on 11 March; and how many prisoners were released on 11 March. [161821]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* On 11 March 2004 there were 4,555 females and 70,414 males being held in Prison Service establishments in England and Wales.

Information on the number of prisoners who were released on early release, the number of prisoners who were eligible for early release and the number of prisoners who were released on 11 March 2004 is not yet available.

Probation

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders undergoing Probation Service accredited programmes *(a)* breached the programme and *(b)* were sentenced to custody as a consequence of a breach in each of the last two financial years. [155054]

Paul Goggins: During 2001–02 a total of 3,962 offenders undergoing accredited programmes failed to complete, of which 1,425 (36 per cent.) were because of breach. As a percentage of those dropouts recorded in 2002–03, breaches accounted for 37 per cent.

Offenders may not have completed their programme due to failure to complete other aspects of supervision, not necessarily due to failure to complete the programme itself.

Data on the exact number of offenders undergoing National Probation Service accredited programmes who were sentenced to custody as a consequence of a

breach is unavailable. At present we only monitor outcomes by sentence and not content. The introduction of Interim Accredited Programme Software later this year will facilitate to the monitoring of sentence by outcomes.

The number of offenders who were sentenced to immediate custody for breaches of community sentences in 2001 was 8,094. In 2002 the number was 9,071.

Research and Statistics Directorate

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many people are employed by his Department's Research and Statistics Directorate; and how many employees there were in each year since 1997; [161787]

(2) how many research projects have been undertaken by *(a)* in-house researchers in the Research and Statistics Directorate and *(b)* external contractors in each year since 1997. [161788]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Research, Development and Statistics Directorate (RDS) is the main Home Office resource to support performance measurement and delivery of social research and analysis essential to building the evidence base for policy development. The available information on staffing and projects undertaken by RDS are shown in the tables.

During the period 1997 to 2004, RDS has evolved and created new teams. This has been in response to the need to meet demands for faster collection and analysis of more comprehensive performance data as well as to carry out more timely and targeted research, particularly in the areas of crime reduction, drugs and alcohol, immigration and communities research as well as enhancing the capacity for economic analysis and modelling.

Some of the projects identified will carry forward into two or more years and are included in the figures for both years. Projects undertaken by RDS can vary in size, complexity and scope. In addition to this RDS responds to regular ad-hoc requests for R and D advice from both within the Home Office and from external organisations.

Table 1: Staff compliment for the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate—1997–98 to 2003–04

	Number of staff RDS compliment
1997–8	260
1998–9	260
1999–2000[1]	280
2000–01[2]	360
2001–02[3]	375
2002–03[4]	435
2003–04	445
Current	422 in post

[1] The 1999–2000 figures reflect re-structuring of Social Research within the Home Office; the Police Research Group (40 staff) joined together with the Research and Statistics Directorate to form the new Research, Development and Statistics Directorate (RDS). At the same time, 15 staff from Co-ordinating Computing in Criminal Justice System moved out of RDS.

[2] The 2000–01 figure includes a new team that was set up to support evaluation of the crime reduction programme. There was also a new programme to expand the evidence base for Immigration research and voluntary/community research.

[3] In 2001–02 the Machinery of Government changes resulted in the movement of Fire Statistics to Department of Environment, Transport and Regions (now Office of the Deputy Prime Minister).

[4] The 2002–03 figure reflects the establishment of a new team to support research into drugs and alcohol research, in particular supporting the development of the Drugs Strategy and further development of the Immigration Research programme and in the capacity for economic analysis.

All totals are based on the RDS complement and are full-time equivalents.

Table 2: Number of Research Projects undertaken by (a) in-house researchers and (b) through external contractors in the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate 1998–99–2003–04

	In-house research projects	*Externally contracted research projects*
1998–99	[1]56	[1]45
1999–2000	[1]120	[1]65
2000–01	[1]106	[2]137
2001–02	[1]108	[2]283
2002–03	[1]171	[2]294
2003–04	[1]212	[2]222

[1] The figures for these years are based on a manual count of projects in the Research Development and Statistics Directorate (RDS) business plan.

[2] The figures are based on a central record of RDS external contracts

Sentencing Guidelines

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he will ensure that victims' views are taken into account by the criminal justice system when he sets sentencing guidelines. [162517]

Paul Goggins: The Criminal Justice Act 2003 established the Sentencing Guidelines Council to provide sentencing guidelines for all courts. The Council includes four non-judicial members, one of whom must have experience of "the promotion of the welfare of the victims of crime". Teresa Reynolds from Victim Support has been appointed to fulfil this role.

The victim Personal Statement scheme, introduced in October 2001, provided victims with the opportunity to explain the full extent of the consideration to the contents of the statement when sentencing an offender, although the opinion of the victim as to the specific sentence will not be taken into account.

In cases where the offender is given a life sentence for murder, the family of the victim have the opportunity to make personal statements, which should be taken into account by the courts when setting the minimum term to be served.

Sex Offences (Peterborough)

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on how decisions are taken to allocate those accused of sex offences to the bail hostel in Peterborough. [162539]

Paul Goggins: In common with all 100 approved probation and bail hostels, Peterborough Approved Premises accepts a range of residents, including those on bail or convicted of sexual offences. The decision to admit anyone to an approved premises is only taken after careful consideration of the risks. This includes the risk to the local community. If any of the risk is assessed as too high then no place is offered. Even if a place is offered by the approved premises, this decision then has to be endorsed by the court, a prison governor or the Parole Board.

Young Offenders

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of young offenders has been diagnosed as suffering from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in the last five years. [157478]

Paul Goggins: We do not have this information at national level but a number of steps are being taken to understand and provide access to treatment for this condition. Research on prevalence and effective practice is being conducted at six sites; youth offending teams have health workers who assess and make referrals, with the support of a specialist mental health screening tool; the Youth Justice Board has issued guidance on mental health practice and is developing training for Youth Offending Teams. The Youth Justice Board, Department of Health and Prison Service are working jointly on improving access to health services within the youth justice system.

DEFENCE

Anti-anthrax Vaccines

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research his Department has carried out on the health effects of anti-anthrax vaccines given to military personnel and medical auxiliaries involved in *(a)* Operation Granby in the Gulf War against Iraq in 1991 and *(b)* Operation Telic in Iraq in 2003. [160856]

Mr. Caplin: No research has been carried out specifically on the possible adverse health effects of the anthrax vaccine given to personnel involved in Operation Granby or Operation Telic.

However, the results of a research project on the safety of the anthrax vaccine in randomly selected military personnel due to be deployed on Operation Bolton were published in the journal, "Vaccine", in 2003 (Vaccine vol.21 2003 pp 1348–13 54). The study was funded by the Ministry of Defence, but the MOD had no editorial input into its conduct, methodology, or findings. No serious side effects were observed, and the study concluded that the modest incidence of side effects supported the stance that the anthrax vaccination is safe.

Arctic Campaign Veterans

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will introduce a medal for those servicemen who served on the Arctic convoys to Russia during the Second World War. [162159]

Mr. Caplin: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 595–96, to my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen).

Armoured Battlegroup Support Vehicle

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the cost of the Armoured Battlegroup Support Vehicle; and when he expects this vehicle to enter service. [160809]

Mr. Ingram: No decisions have yet been made on the numbers and types of vehicles required for the Armoured Battlegroup Support Vehicle role, nor have final decisions been taken on the procurement route to be adopted. Consequently, overall programme costs are not certain at this time. The in-service date for this project will not be set until the programme passes its main gate.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made on the procurement of the Armoured Battlegroup Support Vehicle; and when he expects to make a decision on the awarding of the contract. [160810]

Mr. Ingram: A preliminary assessment has been made of the options to meet the Armoured Battlegroup Support Vehicle requirement, including the feasibility of converting surplus Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicles to this role. There are no plans for early contract award.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the role of the proposed Armoured Battlegroup Support Vehicle will be. [160812]

Mr. Ingram: It is planned that Armoured Battlegroup Support Vehicle (ABSV) will be employed as a support vehicle within armoured battlegroups, where its use alongside Warrior and Challenger 2 will improve the coherence of, and ease support to, those fighting units. Potential roles for the ABSV include armoured personnel carrier, ambulance, and command vehicles.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what effect the proposed future rapid effects system has had on the future requirement for the Armoured Battlegroup Support Vehicle. [160813]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Rapid Effect System (FRES) programme has had no significant impact upon the requirement for the Armoured Battlegroup Support Vehicle (ABSV). It is intended that FRES will be employed primarily within future medium weight forces, while ABSV will be employed primarily within the existing heavy force.

Budget Holders

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list his Department's top level budget holders and their related management groups for the financial years *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04. [161121]

Mr. Hoon: The Management Grouping structure for the financial years 2002–03 and 2003–04 are as follows.

Top level budget	*Management groupings*	
2002–03		
Commander-in-Chief Fleet	Fleet	
General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland)	General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland)	
Commander-in-Chief Land Command	Field Army (Theatre Troops)	1(UK) Armoured Division
	2nd Division	UK Support Command (Germany)
	3rd Division	Joint Helicopter Command
	4th Division	Land Support
	5th Division	
Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief RAF Strike Command	1 Group	3 Group
	2 Group	Deputy Commander-in-Chief
Chief of Joint Operations	British Forces Cyprus	British Forces Gibraltar
	Permanent Joint Headquarters	Sovereign Base Areas Administration
	British Forces Falkland Islands	
Chief of Defence Logistics	Defence Fuels Group	Dep Chief of Defence Logistics
	Defence Communication Services Agency	Defence Logistics Support HQ
		Defence Clothing and Textiles Agency
	DG Equipment Support (Land)	Warship Support Agency
	DG Equipment Support (Air)	Defence Storage and Distribution Agency
	Director Land Service Ammunition	
	Defence Transport and Movements Agency	British Forces Post Office
2nd Sea Lord/Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command	Flag Officer Training and Recruiting	HQ
	Naval Secretary	
Adjutant General	Army Personnel Centre	Adjutant General
	Army Training and Recruiting Agency	Army Programme
	Service Childrens Education	General Staff
Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief RAF Personnel and Training Command	Personnel Management Agency	Core HQ
	Training Group Defence Agency	
Central	Personnel Director	War Pensions Agency
	Pay and Personnel Agency	Surgeon General
	Defence Vetting Agency	Dep Chief Defence Staff (Personnel)
	Defence Export Services Org	Defence Secondary Care Agency
	Finance Director	Defence Dental Agency
	Defence Analytical Services Agency	Defence Housing Executive
	Defence Bills Agency	Defence Medical Training Org
	Chief Constable MOD Police	Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency
	Chief Scientific Adviser	
	Defence Estates	Policy Director
	Dep Chief Defence Staff (Commitments)	Dep Chief Defence Staff (Equipment Capability)
	Director Special Forces	Chief of Defence Intelligence
	Defence Geographic and Imaging Intelligence Agency	Defence Intelligence and Security Centre
Defence Procurement Agency	Internal Costs	Programme Account
	Nuclear	
2003–04		
Commander-in-Chief Fleet	Fleet	
General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland)	General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland)	
Commander-in-Chief Land Command	Command Field Army	
	Joint Helicopter Command	
	Land Support	
	Command Regional Forces	
Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief RAF Strike Command	1 Group	3 Group
	2 Group	Deputy Commander-in-Chief
Chief of Joint Operations	British Forces Cyprus	British Forces Gibraltar
	Permanent Joint Headquarters	Sovereign Base Areas Administration
	British Forces Falkland Islands	

Top level budget	*Management groupings*	
Chief of Defence Logistics	Defence Fuels Group	Dep Chief of Defence Logistics
	Defence Communication Services Agency	Defence Clothing & Textiles Agency
	DG Equipment Support (Land)	Defence Supply Chain HQ
	DG Equipment Support (Air)	Defence Storage and Distribution Agency
	Defence Transport and Movements Agency	British Forces Post Office
		Warship Support Agency
2nd Sea Lord/Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command	Flag Officer Training and Recruiting	HQ
	Naval Secretary	
Adjutant General	Army Personnel Centre	Adjutant General
	Army Training and Recruiting Agency	Army Programme
	Service Childrens Education	General Staff
	Primary Health Care	QVS
		DYRMS
Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief RAF Personnel and Training Command	Personnel Management Agency	Core HQ
	Training Group Defence Agency	
Central	Personnel Director	Veterans Agency
	Pay and Personnel Agency	Dep Chief Defence Staff (Personnel)
	Defence Vetting Agency	Defence Dental Agency
	Defence Export Services Org	Defence Housing Executive
	Finance Director	Armed Forces Personnel
	Defence Analytical Services Agency	Administration Agency
	Defence Bills Agency	Policy Director
	Chief Constable MOD Police	Dep Chief Defence Staff (Equipment Capability)
	Chief Scientific Adviser	
	Defence Academy	Chief of Defence Intelligence
	Defence Estates	Defence Intelligence and Security Centre
	Dep Chief Defence Staff (Commitments)	Defence Medical Services Department
		Defence Medical Education and Training Agency.
	Director Special Forces	
	Defence Geographic and Imaging Intelligence Agency	
Defence Procurement Agency	Internal Costs	Programme Account
	Nuclear	

Civilian Posts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many *(a)* service and *(b)* of his Department's civilian posts have been transferred to the private sector in each year since 1997 for the (i) Royal Navy, (ii) Army and (iii) Royal Air Force; [154628]

(2) how many *(a)* Army, *(b)* Royal Navy, *(c)* Royal Air Force and *(d)* of his Department's civilian posts have been transferred to the private sector in each year since 1997. [160904]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the impact of the accession of new members to NATO on the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty; and if he will make a statement. [160325]

Mr. Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

We look forward to the new members joining NATO on 29 March. Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia are already States Parties to the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia cannot join the CFE Treaty yet, but will be eligible to join the Adapted CFE Treaty when it comes into force. NATO Allies will not ratify the Adapted CFE Treaty until Russia has met the commitments it made to Georgia and Moldova at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in November 1999. NATO Allies have made clear their intention to ratify the Adapted CFE Treaty once these commitments have been met and we hope that Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia will sign up to the Adapted CFE Treaty as soon as they are able to do so.

Deepcut Barracks

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many hours per week on average each Royal Logistic Corps trainee at Deepcut barracks was required to perform guard duty in the last year for which figures are available. [162268]

Mr. Ingram: Detailed information on this is not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, in line with individual training programmes each soldier undergoing phase 2 training at the Princess Royal Barracks Deepcut can expect to spend on average some 84 hours on guard duties.

Defence Intelligence Services

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Defence Intelligence Services. [162299]

Mr. Hoon: The Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) is an integral part of the Ministry of Defence and plays an essential role in achieving the UK's defence objectives. It is a key contributor to the successful prosecution of military operations. As emphasised in the recent Defence White Paper "Delivering Security in a Changing World", the strategic environment is increasingly uncertain and comprises a diverse range of threats which require intelligence-led responses.

The DIS will therefore continue to be an important element of our overall defence capability.

Departmental Communications

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff are employed in the Department to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158164]

Mr. Caplin: As of 15 March 2004, there were 130 people employed within the communications organisation in the Ministry of Defence Headquarters. Of these, 24 are members of the Government Information and Communication Service. Of the remainder, seven work in the Press Office and the others are employed on a wide range of tasks including design, publicity, marketing, internal communications and strategic planning.

Ministers in the department have two special advisers, neither of whom are members of the communications organisation. The Special Advisers' Code of Conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister and this includes communications activity.

In addition to the above, a number of people are employed, either wholly or partly, in communications related work throughout defence. These include staff working in defence agencies, the permanent joint Headquarters, single service commands and individual military units. Accurate information on all of these posts is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total expenditure on communications for his Department has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158211]

Mr. Caplin: The cost of staff employed within the communications organisation in the Ministry of Defence headquarters is expected to be in the region of £5.9 million for 2003–04; of this, around £1 million is attributable to members of the Government Information and Communication Service (GICS). Of the remainder, around £0.3 million relates to non-GICS staff in the press office and the balance of the cost is for staff employed on a wide range of tasks including design, publicity, marketing, internal communications and strategic planning.

The Special Advisers' Code of Conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister and this includes communications activity. Details of the costs of special advisers are given on an annual basis. Information for the financial year 2003–04 will be published in due course.

Costs for staff employed in communications elsewhere in the Department are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Drugs

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel tested positive for the use of each controlled substance, broken down by unit, in calendar year 2003. [161307]

Mr. Caplin: The number of positive results for the use of controlled substances in each of the Services in 2003 are shown in the following tables. In all cases, positive results indicate the number of substances detected, not necessarily the number of personnel.

The Naval Service

Unit	*Cannabis*	*Amphetamines*	*Ecstasy*	*Cocaine*	*Heroin*
Ships					
HMS Argyle	1				
HMS Atherstone				1	
HMS Brecon			1		
HMS Cardiff				4	
HMS Enterprise				1	
HMS Exeter	1		1	1	
HMS Glasgow		1	1		
HMS Gloucester			1		
HMS Invincible	1	1	1	1	
HMS Marlborough				1	
HMS Richmond	1				
HMS Southampton	1				
HMS Westminster				1	
HMS York			1	1	
Shore Establishments					
Britannia Royal Naval College				1	
Directorate of Naval Recruiting	1				
HMS Collingwood			1	2	1
HMS Drake	1			1	

Unit	Cannabis	Amphetamines	Ecstasy	Cocaine	Heroin
HMS Dryad	1		2		
HMS Excellent	1				
HMS Forest Moor		1	1		
HMS Neptune	1				
HMS Raleigh	2				
HMS Sultan	1		1	1	
Submarines					
HMS Sceptre	1				
HMS Viligant				1	
Royal Marines					
40 Commando RM	1			1	
42 Commando RM			1	1	
45 Commando RM				1	
539 Assault Sqn RM	1	1		1	
Commando Logistic Regiment RM	2		1		
CTCRM Lympstone	1				
Force Protection Group RM	1		2	1	
RM Poole	1			1	
RMB Stonehouse	2				
Total	23	4	15	23	1

RAF

Station/Unit	Cannabis	Ecstasy
RAF Leeming	1	
RAF Cosford		2
RAF St. Athan	1	
RAF Coningsby	1	
RAF Uxbridge	1	
RAF Halton	3	
RAF Cottesmore	3	
RAF Wittering	1	
RAF Buchan	1	
RAF Marham	1	
RAF Benson		1
RAF Lyneham	1	
RAF Kinloss		1
RAF Leuchars	1	
DST Leconfield	1	
Totals	16	4

Army

The Army do not record data in the same way as the other two Services. A detailed breakdown of positive results by substance detected is not held centrally. Centralised statistics are available only by corps and divisions of infantry which for 2003 are as follows:

Arm/Service	Number of tests	Positive results
Bands	271	0
RGR	1,041	0
Int Corps	198	0
AGC(ETS) and (SPS)	34	0
Misc.	3,197	5
AGC(Pro)	635	1
HQs	2,356	4
RAMC	1,281	3
AAC	671	2
R Signals	6,025	18
Training units	28,921	118
RE	6,214	27
REME	3,178	14
R Irish	1,587	7
RA	6,169	31
TA	3,084	18
RLC	6,146	36
Para	1,055	8
GDS	3,596	34
RAC	3,127	30
Queens	2,169	22
Arm/Service	Number of tests	Positive results
POW	3,551	40
Light	1,489	18
Kings	4,305	72
Scottish	2,868	72
Total	93,168	580

Eurofighter Typhoon

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make a statement on Tranche Two of the Eurofighter. [161361]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1634W to my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice).

Iraq

Mr. Paul Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what conditions are attached to the payment of compensation to Iraqi civilians who have lost relatives due to UK actions; and if he will make a statement. [151617]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 30 January 2004]*: Claims made by Iraqis for losses that do not arise in connection with combat operations are handled in accordance with the direction of the Coalition Provisional Authority—specifically Section 6 of CPA order number 17. This states that:

> 'Third party claims including those for property loss or damage and for personal injury and death or in respect of any other matter arising form or attributing to Coalition personnel or any persons employed by them, whether normally resident in Iraq or not, and that do not arise in connection with military combat operations, shall be submitted and dealt with by the Parent State whose coalition personnel, property, activities or other assets are alleged to have caused the claimed damage, in a manner consistent with the national laws of the Parent State'.

Hence, we will generally pay compensation in circumstances where the claims officer decides that, on the balance of probability, the claim would give rise to a legal liability under English Law.

Iraqi claimants who are offered compensation are required to sign a declaration that:

'I, name of claimant, agree to accept the sum of $xxxx in respect of the loss of my son/daughter/father/mother [name]. I understand and accept that this offer is made without admission of liability of behalf of the British contingent of the Coalition Forces in Iraq, and is a full and final settlement of all claims whatsoever relating to the incident that occurred on ddmmyyyy.'

Liability is not admitted as to do so would set a precedent for further claims relating to the incident and future claims.

This is not a liability waiver. Such a waiver would require those compensated to waive some legal rights—including the right to sue for personal injury or death. This type of waiver would normally be used for example when one is undertaking an adventurous activity that carries with it a high level of risk.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what reports he has received of politically motivated killings within the British zone in Southern Iraq perpetrated by political groups represented within the Iraqi Governing Council. [153873]

Mr. Ingram: We are not aware of any deaths within the UK area of responsibility in Southern Iraq, which have been attributed to a person or political group represented within the Iraqi Governing Council.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in relation to the deaths of which civilians in Iraq the UK Government has made ex-gratia payments to the families of the deceased; and how much has been paid in each case. [154477]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 11 February 2004]*: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on which dates and in relation to which individuals UK forces in Iraq have informed the International Committee of the Red Cross of confirmed civilian casualties which *(a)* have been caused and *(b)* are alleged to have been caused by UK forces. [154488]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 12 February 2004]*: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the house.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 919W, on Iraq, how many ex-gratia payments have been made to Iraqis regardless of legal liability, broken down by *(a)* amount and *(b)* reason for the payment in each case; and if he will make a statement. [154901]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 3 March 2004]:* I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much fuel was purchased for UK forces in Iraq for each month since the inception of the war; from which *(a)* country and *(b)* company the fuel was purchased; and what the average price paid was. [154953]

Mr. Ingram: Between August 2003 and February 2004, United Kingdom forces purchased the following amounts of fuel from Jassim Transport and Stevedoring Co WLL, Kuwait:

	Diesel		*Unleaded*	
	Volume (litres)	*Cost (£)*	*Volume (litres)*	*Cost (£)*
August 2003	300,000	35,015	433,000	50,539
September 2003	330,000	38,517	360,000	42,018
October 2003	240,500	28,071	415,000	48,438
November 2003	186,500	21,768	388,000	45,287
December 2003	106,000	12,372	385,000	44,936
January 2004	594,500	69,389	275,000	32,097
February 2004	265,000	30,930	428,500	50,014
Totals	2,022,500	236,062	2,684,500	313,329

No figures are available prior to this date as diesel and unleaded petrol were provided to UK forces through the US supply chain.

The UK does not purchase aviation fuel for its forces in Iraq. This is supplied by the US, which has lead-nation responsibility in this area.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been paid to families of Iraqi civilians killed by UK personnel in Iraq. [158034]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to my hon. Friend and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give the *(a)* age and *(b)* sex of those Iraqi civilians (i) whose deaths have been investigated by the Special Investigations Branch and (ii) whose deaths have resulted in the offer of ex gratia payments from the United Kingdom Government. [158861]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Joint Strike Fighter

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much money the Government has spent on research and development of the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF); and what the estimated date is for the delivery of the JSF to the Ministry of Defence. [161244]

Mr. Ingram: To date, a total of £318 million has been spent on the Assessment (£144 million) and Demonstration (£174 million) phases of the Future Joint Combat Aircraft (FJCA) programme. This total includes our contributions to the JSF programme, as the means of meeting the FJCA requirement, and the costs associated with UK national activities.

While no final decisions have been taken, the FJCA in service date, based on current planning assumptions, is forecast to be 2012 with first aircraft delivery in 2010.

Land Command

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the cost of maintaining United Kingdom Land Command headquarters at Wilton is for 2003–04; [162570]

(2) how many *(a)* service and *(b)* civilian personnel were employed at the United Kingdom Land Command headquarters in Wilton (i) in 2000, (ii) in 2001, (iii) in 2002 and (iv) at the latest available date. [162569]

Mr. Ingram: The annual cost of maintaining Headquarters Land Command for the financial year 2003–04 is estimated at £50 million. This figure includes pay, utilities, IT and other costs of those elements at Wilton that form the Headquarters. Where possible, the costs of lodger units based at the site have been excluded.

The numbers of military and civilian personnel included within the above costs are:

	Military	*Civilian*
2001–01	537	626
2001–02	532	630
2002–03	413	639
2003–04	360	625

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many troops were under the command of UK Land Command in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [162571]

Mr. Ingram: The number of troops under the command of Land Command in April 2003 and April 2004 was 73,030 and 77,580 respectively. The increase is primarily owing to the call out of reservists for operations overseas.

Post Office

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2004, from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions, *Official Report*, column 584W, on direct payment, how many *(a)* Post Office Card Accounts and *(b)* bank or building society accounts have (i) been requested for and (ii) are receiving payments of war pensions, broken down by region. [162735]

Mr. Caplin: The information is not available in the format requested as data is not recorded in individual regions.

The Veterans Agency records show that as at 15 March the total number of requests for Post Office Card Accounts is 42,187 and for payment into a bank/building society, 57,953.

The total number of customers who have converted to Post Office Card Accounts is 14,956. The total number of customers who have converted to a bank/building society is 57,947. The total number of war pensions paid by direct payment into an account (including Post Office Card Account) is 213,432, which represents 85.66 per cent. of the payload.

Regimental Records

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the search records of *(a)* the 7th City of Belfast battalion of the Ulster Defence Regiment, *(b)* the 10th City of Belfast battalion of the Ulster Defence Regiment, *(c)* the 3rd County Down battalion of the Ulster Defence Regiment and *(d)* the regular military units operating in their tactical area of responsibility are still held. [162687]

Mr. Ingram: The search records of all military units in Northern Ireland are held in the Northern Ireland Search Report Archive and reports of any searches which did not produce a find are routinely destroyed after six years when the statute of limitation for claims runs out. Records of productive searches may be held indefinitely in the archives, therefore it is possible that some search reports dating prior to 1992, when the Ulster Defence Regiment disbanded, would still be held.

Heroes Return Scheme

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what support his Department is providing for the celebration of Heroes Return outside London. [158700]

Mr. Caplin: The New Opportunity Fund's 'Heroes Return' scheme, which forms part of the 'Veterans Reunited' programme, focuses on overseas visits for veterans, their spouses or widows and their carers. 'Heroes Return' will enable Second World War veterans resident in the United Kingdom, whether inside or outside London, to make overseas visits to commemorate the campaigns in which they participated.

Unexploded Ordnance

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total amount of ordnance destroyed in the UK by controlled explosions was in the last five years; and what sorts of ordnance were involved. [161868]

Mr. Ingram: During the period April 1999 to February 2004 the Ministry of Defence has arranged for the demilitarisation by incineration, open burning and open detonation of 11,492 tonnes (all up weight) of conventional munitions ranging from Small Arms Ammunition to Guided Weapons.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the life expectancy is of *(a)* Swingfire, *(b)* Milan and *(c)* artillery shells in war stocks; and what the policy of removal is. [161870]

Mr. Ingram: The life of a munition is constantly under consideration and work is ongoing while in-service to ensure the nature remains safe and suitable for use. When missiles reach the end of their in-service life they are disposed of either through being used for training purposes, or if that is not possible through a demilitarisation programme. At present both Swingfire and Milan missiles have an in-service life of 17 years.

Artillery shells are maintained to the required level of safety and in sufficient quantities to meet operational requirements. It is preferred to utilise artillery shells for training purposes rather than opting for disposal, thereby maximising their usefulness. Typically, the in service life of an Artillery Shell is a minimum of 10 years.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what joint programmes with other countries have been undertaken on *(a)* research and *(b)* building of unmanned aerial vehicles. [158511]

Mr. Ingram: The UK is involved in 28 international research collaboration for a covering technology relevant to unmanned aerial vehicles. None of these are specific to UAVs. The UK has not undertaken any joint programmes with other countries on building UAVs.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Conferences

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many non-ministerial staff in his Department have attended conferences *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* abroad in the year to 29 February; and what the cost of attending these conferences was, broken down by (i) travel costs, (ii) food and drink, (iii) accommodation and (iv) miscellaneous costs. [160799]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The information required for this answer is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

East Africa

Tony Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will propose action to the UN Security Council to resolve the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea. [162904]

Mr. Mullin: The UK, and other members of the Security Council, will continue to press Ethiopia and Eritrea to accept the Boundary Commission decision, which is final and binding, and begin a comprehensive political dialogue on all of the issues separating them. We have welcomed the appointment of the UN Special Envoy, Lloyd Axworthy, and are urging both parties to work with him on resolving their differences.

EU Enlargement

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his European counterparts on EU enlargement; and if he will make a statement. [162300]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary often raises EU enlargement in his bilateral and other meetings with European counterparts and he regularly reaffirms the Government's support for enlargement.

European Council of Ministers

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many informal meetings of the European Council of Ministers took place *(a)* between 1 July and 31 December 2003 and *(b)* since 1 January; when these meetings took place; what topics were discussed at these meetings; what informal meetings are planned until 30 June; and if he will make a statement; [159337]

(2) how many informal meetings of the European Council of Ministers took place *(a)* between 1 January and 30 June 2002, *(b)* 1 July 2002 and 31 December 2002, *(c)* 1 January and 30 June 2003 and *(d)* 1 July and 31 December 2003; when these meetings took place; what issues were discussed at each of these meetings; which members of the Scottish Executive were present at each meeting; and if he will make a statement. [159338]

Mr. MacShane: Recent Presidencies have defined informal ministerial meetings differently in their official Presidency websites. The following list sets out those informal ministerial meetings which met to transact substantive business.

The Spanish Presidency between 1 January and 30 June 2002 held 10 informal ministerial meetings, on the following dates and covering the following topics:

25–26 January on Employment;

9–10 February on Foreign Affairs (Gymnich Informal Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs);

14–15 February on Justice and Home Affairs;

22–23 February on Telecoms and the Information Society;

23–24 March on Defence;

13–14 April on Finance (ECOFIN);

27–30 April on Agriculture and Fisheries;

3–4 May on Tourism;

24–26 May on Environment issues;

31 May to 1 June on Transport.

The Danish Presidency between 1 July and 31 December 2002 held eight informal ministerial meetings on the following dates and covering the following topics:

12–13 July on Employment and Social Policy;

19–21 July on Environment issues;

1 September on Foreign Affairs (Gymnich Informal Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs);

6–8 September on Finance (informal ECOFIN);

8–10 September on Agriculture and Fisheries;

12–13 September on Justice and Home Affairs;

4–5 October on Defence;

18–19 October on the Internal Market. Consumer Affairs and Industry.

The Greek Presidency between 1 January and 30 June 2003 held 13 informal ministerial meetings, on the following dates and covering the following topics:

24 January on Employment;

22 February on Energy;

1–2 March on Education;

14–15 March on Defence;

28–29 March on Justice and Home Affairs;

4–6 April on Finance (informal ECOFIN Council);

2–4 May on Environment;

12–13 May on Agriculture and Fisheries;

16–17 May on Regional Policy;

16–18 May on Transport and Merchant Marine;

24 May on Culture;

6 June on Public Administration;

12–13 June on Development Co-operation.

The Italian Presidency between 1 July and 31 December 2003 held 18 informal ministerial meetings on the following topics:

4–5 July on Transport and Infrastructure;

6 July on Trade;

10–12 July on Employment and Social Policies;

11–12 July on Competitiveness;

18–20 July on Environment and Energy;

3–5 September on Telecommunications;

5–6 September on General Affairs and External Relations;

5–6 September on Health;

12–13 September on Justice and Home Affairs;

12–13 September on Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN);

20–23 September on Agriculture;

1–2 October on Culture;

3–4 October on Defence;

20 October on Regional Policy;

24 October on Development Co-operation;

21 November on Consumer Policies;

1 December on Civil Service;

2 December on Trade.

The Irish Presidency up to 8 March 2004 has held two informal ministerial meetings, on the following dates and covering the following topics:

16–17 January on Employment and Social Policy;

22–23 January on Justice and Home Affairs.

13–14 April on Finance (ECOFIN);

27–30 April on Agriculture and Fisheries;

3–4 May on Tourism;

24–26 May on Environment issues;

31 May to 1 June on Transport.

The Irish Presidency intends to hold five further informal ministerial meetings, on the following dates and covering the following topics:

2–3 April on Economics and Finance (ECOFIN);

5–6 April on Defence;

16–17 April on Foreign Affairs (Gymnich);

9–10 May on Agriculture;

14–15 May on Environment.

The Scottish First Minister, right hon. Jack McConnell, attended the Informal Council on Regional Policy on 20 October 2003. Ministers from each Devolved Administration attend formal Councils of particular interest to that Devolved Administration.

I have written to the hon. Member on this issue and have placed a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Falkland Islands

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the availability of *(a)* charter and *(b)* scheduled flights to the Falkland Islands; and what plans Her Majesty's Government has to bring about an increase in the (i) capacity and (ii) frequency of flights to the Islands. [162635]

Mr. Rammell: No charter flights are currently operating to and from the Falkland Islands. One weekly Lan Chile scheduled service operates between Chile and the Falkland Islands. There is also a regular flight between the UK and the Falkland Islands, via Ascension Island. The Falkland Island Development Corporation and Her Majesty's Government continue to look at ways of increasing the capacity and frequency of flights to the Falkland Islands.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to my recent written statements of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 51–52WS and 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 73–74WS.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to Argentina about the introduction of an open skies policy on charter flights to the Falkland Islands; and if he will make a statement. [162636]

Mr. Rammell: I discussed charter flights with Argentine Foreign Minister Bielsa during my recent visit to Argentina. I refer the hon. Gentleman to my written statement of 1 March on the issue of air links between the Falkland Islands and mainland South America, *Official Report*, columns 73–74WS.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the Argentine Government's policy on use of its airspace by *(a)* charter and *(b)* scheduled flights to the Falkland Island originating in Chile. [162637]

Mr. Rammell: The weekly Lan Chile flights between Chile and the Falkland Islands are covered by the UK/Argentina 1999 Joint Statement. On charter flights, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the written statement I made on 1 March on the issue of air links between the Falkland Islands and mainland South America, *Official Report*, columns 73–74WS.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is the policy of Her Majesty's Government not to enter into negotiations with the Government of Argentina on sovereignty of the Falkland Islands; and if he will make a statement. [162638]

Mr. Rammell: It is the policy of Her Majesty's Government not to enter into negotiations with the Government of Argentina on sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. Her Majesty's Government have no doubts about their sovereignty of the Falkland Islands and their surrounding maritime areas.

Guatemala

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of progress in improving human rights in Guatemala. [162608]

Mr. Rammell: 2003 was a poor year for human rights in Guatemala. There was much violence in the run up to the presidential elections in November and December 2003. However, we have noted positively the efforts President Berger has made since his inauguration on 14 January to improve human rights in Guatemala.

Berger's first public act as President was to declare his commitment to the Guatemalan Peace Accords signed in 1996, and on 25 February he announced the establishment of a new national commission to oversee implementation of the Accords. Given the undertakings in the Peace Accords this should help improve the human rights in particular of indigenous groups. President Berger has appointed a respected human rights campaigner, Frank la Rue, as his Presidential Commissioner on Human Rights. I welcome this appointment.

When I visited Guatemala in January, I stressed the importance of human rights issues to the new Vice-President. We have also encouraged the new Guatemalan

Government to implement in full the 1996 Peace Accords. Our Embassy in Guatemala City will continue to monitor human rights closely.

Human Rights

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to support the *(a)* adoption and *(b)* implementation within an agreed timescale of the UN norms on the responsibilities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises with regard to human rights when it is forwarded to the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva; and if he will make a statement. [162292]

Mr. Rammell: The Government are strong supporters of responsible business behaviour and are actively involved in initiatives to promote this. The Draft Norms raise complex issues because they purport to make business directly responsible for human rights. It is States which have obligations under international human rights law to ensure human rights to everyone within their territory and jurisdiction. We believe that States should remain responsible for domestic legislation to regulate the behaviour of private actors in their jurisdiction, including multinational companies. We also believe that according human rights obligations to private business enterprises in international law could be used by certain States to avoid their own obligations and to distract the focus from human rights abuses by States. We therefore believe that it would be detrimental to the advancement of international human rights law if the draft norms were to be adopted by the Commission on Human Rights. However, we shall be working with other Members of the Commission to try to identify a constructive process for addressing issues raised by the Norms, which would command wider acceptance among all stakeholders, including Governments and business as well as NGOs.

Iranian Nuclear Programme

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the *(a)* matters discussed and *(b)* outcome of the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors' consideration of the Iranian nuclear programme on 10–11 March. [161757]

Mr. Rammell: Intensive discussions took place with our EU partners, the US and other members of the Board to produce an agreed text for a Resolution on the Iranian nuclear programme based on the report of the findings of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director-General. The Resolution was adopted by consensus on 13 March.

The text of the Resolution can be found on the IAEA website at www.iaea.org.

Middle East

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the past six months. [162058]

Mr. Rammell: Expansion of settlements and building of outposts have continued in the last six months. As we have made clear, we consider all settlements in the Occupied Territories illegal under international law and an obstacle to a comprehensive peace in the region. The Government regularly presses the Israeli Government to freeze settlement activity and dismantle outposts in line with Israel's commitments under the roadmap.

Both sides need to implement their obligations under the roadmap without delay. We welcome Prime Minister Sharon's reiteration of Israel's commitment to the roadmap and his subsequent announcement that he will remove settlements in Gaza. We would warmly welcome a withdrawal of settlers and the Israeli Defence Force from Gaza to Israel as part of implementation of the Roadmap.

Science Strategy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to enhance science in his Department since the publication of the Government's science strategy Investing in Innovation. [162248]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to his related question on 19 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 1058W.

Since the publication of Investing in Innovation in July 2002 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has continued to expand its Science and Technology network in its posts overseas. There are now nearly 40 attachés in over 20 countries, plus other posts around the world, who are developing Science and Technology activities in support of FCO objectives. The network reports to a wide customer base and works with a number of UK organisations with an interest in Science and Technology overseas. These include Government Departments, parliamentary and devolved institutions, public sector bodies, universities, research and trade organisations and industry. Examples of the work done by the Science and Technology network include: a major campaign to promote UK biosciences in 2003 to mark the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the structure of DNA; lobbying to promote the UK position on cloning before the debates in the UN General Assembly; organising events to explain the science of climate change; and contributing to international negotiations on the site of the proposed International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor.

The FCO works in close partnership with the Office of Science and Technology, the Department of Trade and Industry (especially its team of International Technology Promoters), UK Trade and Investment, the British Council and the Research Councils. The FCO Science and Technology network is working with partners to develop the international dimension of the Government's Innovation Strategy and Investment Framework for Science. The FCO is represented on two new Whitehall committees which have been set up to co-ordinate interests in international Science and Technology: the Chief Scientific Adviser's International Committee and the International Science Technology Trade and Investment Committee. The FCO will also take part in the new Ministerial Group on Innovation and the Knowledge Economy.

Tibet

Mr. Trend: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when his Department last made a statement to the House on the sovereignty of Tibet. [162724]

Mr. Rammell: Successive British Governments have regarded Tibet as autonomous while recognising the special position of the Chinese authorities there. The then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the late Derek Fatchett, stated our position during a debate in the House on 19 March 1999, *Official Report*, column 1463.

PRIME MINISTER

Departmental Officials

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Prime Minister which former officials of his *(a)* Office and *(b)* policy unit have asked for permission to join (i) PricewaterhouseCoopers, (ii) Deloitte and Touche, (iii) Ernst and Young and (iv) KPMG. [156900]

The Prime Minister: It is a matter of public record that Derek Scott has joined KPMG.

Honours

Bob Spink: To ask the Prime Minister how many honours nominations have been submitted in each of the last five years. [162869]

The Prime Minister: Nominations for honours are received in a number of ways, notably through the Nominations Unit in the Cabinet Office or through Government Departments. The information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Prime Minister how many people resident in the constituencies of *(a)* Pendle, *(b)* Burnley, *(c)* Ribble Valley, *(d)* Hyndburn, *(e)* Rossendale and *(f)* Blackburn have received an honour in each year since 1997. [163201]

The Prime Minister: The information requested is not held centrally.

Hunting with Dogs

Phil Sawford: To ask the Prime Minister what plans he has to propose legislation on the issue of hunting with dogs. [162773]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Colchester (Bob Russell) at Prime Minister's Questions on 3 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 501.

Iraq

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Prime Minister what communications the Government received from the United States Administration about the legality in international law of the Iraq war; and if he will make a statement. [161701]

The Prime Minister: We were in frequent contact with the United States and other countries throughout the period leading up to the conflict, before and after the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002).

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Prime Minister when the Government first formed the view that a second UN resolution was not required to ensure the legality of the Iraq war; and if he will make a statement. [161702]

The Prime Minister: I refer the right hon. and learned Member to the answer the Solicitor-General gave to the hon. Member for Stone (Mr. Cash) on 17 March 2003, *Official Report*, column 515–16W.

As the written answer on 17 March 2003 made clear, and is self evident in the text of United Nations Security Council resolution 1441(2002) of 8 November 2002, all that was required was reporting to and discussion by the Security Council of Iraq's failures, but not an express further decision to authorise force.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Prime Minister whether legal advisers other than law officers of the Crown were involved in the preparation and scrutiny of the September 2002 dossier; and if he will make a statement. [161703]

The Prime Minister: It is not the practice to disclose whether any particular legal advice was given, and if so by whom, on specific occasions.

Ministerial Meetings

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the occasions since 1997 on which he met senior executives from *(a)* Enron and *(b)* British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. [162880]

The Prime Minister: I have meetings with a wide range of organisations and individuals. As with previous Administrations it is not my practice to provide details of all such meetings.

A representative of British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. attended a business breakfast in Downing Street on 10 October 2002.

In respect of Enron, I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave him, the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Tom Brake), and the hon. Member for Truro and St. Austell (Matthew Taylor) on 4 February 2002, *Official Report*, columns 689–90W.

Opinion Sampling

Mr. Laws: To ask the Prime Minister what his estimate is of total expenditure by his Office on *(a)* focus groups and *(b)* opinion polls in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [162746]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 6 November 2002, *Official Report*, column 399W and to the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) on 20 November 2001, *Official Report*, column 205W.

People's Peers

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his Answer of 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1076W, on people's peers, when

he expects the names of the second tranche of people's peers to be announced; and if he will make a statement. [162625]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend on 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1076W.

Press Officers

Mr. Laws: To ask the Prime Minister how many press officers were employed in his office in each year from 1990–91 to 2003–04; what the total cost was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [162855]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 3 February 2003, *Official Report*, column 17W.

At 31 March 2003, there were eight staff working as press officers in the No. 10 press office including one on secondment from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The total cost for running the No. 10 press office for 2002–03 was £1,375,894. The increase reflects the ever increasing media demands with the advent of more outlets, 24 hour news and growth of the internet, for example.

As at 1 March 2004, there were eight staff working as press officers in the No. 10 press office including one on secondment from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Final cost figures for 2003–04 are not yet available.

Sovereign States (Pre-emptive Action)

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his speech of 5 March, under what circumstances he supports the right of sovereign states to take pre-emptive action against other states. [162305]

The Prime Minister: Under international law, force may be used in three circumstances:

When authority is provided by the United Nations Security Council acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Security Council resolutions adopted under Chapter VII were the authority for military action in Iraq, as set out in the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Solicitor-General on 17 March 2003, *Official Report*, column 515W. The Security Council may determine the existence of a threat to international peace and security and authorise military force or other action to prevent it becoming an actual breach of the peace.

In exercise of the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence recognised in Article 51 of the UN Charter, as was the case with US action in Afghanistan in 2001. This includes the right of self-defence when an armed attack has not yet taken place, but is imminent.

In exceptional circumstances, when it is the only way to avert an overwhelming humanitarian catastrophe, as in Kosovo in 1999.

As I made clear in my speech on 5 March, the challenges and threats are of a different nature from anything the world has faced before. We must face the threats posed by proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, oppressive and brutal regimes, poverty, HIV/AIDS and environmental damage. We need to take effective action in response to all these challenges, and we cannot always wait for the threat to fully materialise before we act.

I welcome the UN Secretary-General's decision to set up a High Level Panel to review how the UN can respond more effectively to threats to international peace and security, including considering whether any institutional changes are required. And as I also said in my speech on 5 March, the British role should be to construct a consensus behind a broad agenda of justice and security and the means of enforcing it.

United Nations Charter

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister what recent representations he has received on the reform of the *(a)* United Nations Charter and *(b)* international law to limit the sovereignty of nations in cases of (i) urgent humanitarian need and (ii) the threatened aquisition and use of weapons of mass destruction. [162276]

The Prime Minister: My discussions with other leaders frequently touch on the need for effective collective action to deal with all threats to international peace and security. This includes both to avert an overwhelming humanitarian catastrophe and action to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

I welcome the UN Secretary-General's decision to set up a High Level Panel to review how the UN can respond more effectively to threats to international peace and security, including considering whether any institutional changes are required.

CABINET OFFICE

Better Regulation Task Force

Mr. Oliver Heald To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list the enacted regulations that have been repealed on the recommendation of the Better Regulation Task Force since it was established. [161956]

Mr. Alexander: The Better Regulation Task Force advises the Government on action to ensure that regulation and its enforcement meet the principles of good regulation. The Task Force recommends both ways of improving existing regulation and tools for helping us regulate better in future.

The Government has accepted the vast majority of the Task Force's recommendations, a number of which are included in our Regulatory Reform Action Plan, published in December 2003 and available from the Libraries of both Houses.

Consultants

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much his Department spent on external consultants in each financial year since 1997–98; and if he will make a statement. [160051]

Mr. Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley (Mr. Leslie) to the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow) on 26 March 2002, *Official Report*, column 815–816W and to the answer given to the Noble Baroness Wilcox in another place by my hon. Friend, The Lord Macdonald of Tradeston, on 27 November 2002, *Official Report*, column WA42.

The Cabinet Office and the Central Office of Information has spent £13,460,000 during 2002–03 on external consultants.

Expenditure on external consultants during that period included advice on internal IT systems, the development of e-Government initiatives, facilities management and on Strategy Unit studies.

Contingency Planning

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on the implications for contingency planning of the level of civil defence grants in the next financial year. [162301]

Mr. Alexander: The Civil Defence Grant is a contribution towards the cost of local authorities' civil protection work. The aggregate of civil defence grants to be made for the financial year 2004–05 is £19,038,000, which will be distributed according to a formula agreed with the Local Government Association.

The grant will make funds available for the preparation of emergency plans, liaison with the emergency services in preparing for major incidents and other civil protection work.

The Civil Defence Grant is just one small part of what the Government spends on resilience. There are a large number of other statutory bodies involved in local civil protection work including the Police Service, the Fire Service, the Ambulance Service and the Environment Agency. They are funded accordingly for this work.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to his answer of 8 March, *Official Report*, columns 1262–3W, on non-departmental public bodies, if he will make a statement on the change in his Department's expenditure on such bodies since 1996–97. [162022]

Mr. Alexander: The Cabinet Office was responsible for eight Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) in 1996–97 and 10 NDPBs in 2002–03.

Expenditure for these public bodies in 1996–97 and 2002–03 is set out in the following table.

£ million

NDPB	[1]*1996–97*	*2002–03*
British Government Panel on Sustainable Development	0.050	—
Citizen's Charter Panel of Advisers	0.083	—
Deregulation Task Force	0.065	—
Advisory Committee on Advertising	—	0.004
Advisory Committee on Business Appointments	0.051	0.061
Civil Service Appeal Board	0.308	0.393
Committee on Standards in Public Life	0.485	0.638
Honours Scrutiny Committee	0	0
Security Commission	0.005	0.007
Better Regulation Task Force[2]	—	0.517
Security Vetting Appeal Panel	—	0.024
Senior Salaries Review Body[3]	—	0.292
House of Lords Appointments Commission	—	0.152
Total	1.047	2.088

[1] Expenditure

[2] The expenditure figure for The Better Regulation Task Force in 2002/03 is not directly comparable with the 1996–97 expenditure figure for its predecessor, the Deregulation Task Force. The Better Regulation Task Force figure includes staff costs for the Task Force secretariat. Staff costs for the Deregulation Task Force in 1996–97 were not calculated.

[3] Although sponsored by the Cabinet Office, costs are met by the DTI.

Parliamentary Questions

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what criteria are applied, and by whom, when a decision is taken that duplicate Parliamentary Questions tabled to different departments should be responded to by means of one composite reply; what mechanism exists for identifying such questions; and if he will make a statement. [162308]

Mr. Alexander: Departments prepare answers to Parliamentary Questions in accordance with the Guidance to Officials on Drafting Answers to Parliamentary Questions, re-issued by the Cabinet Office in September 2002. Departments liaise with each other from time to time where Parliamentary Questions cut across departmental boundaries. It is for individual Ministers to decide on the contents of answers to Parliamentary Questions.

Recycling

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what targets he has set in his Department for the recycling of waste *(a)* paper, *(b)* cardboard, *(c)* glass, *(d)* metal and *(e)* plastic in each of the last three years; and what results have been achieved. [160064]

Mr. Alexander: The Cabinet Office works towards meeting waste targets set for individual Government Departments by the Ministerial Sub-Committee (ENV(G)).

Figures for Cabinet Office recycling in each of the last three years are published in the Greening Government 3rd Annual Report and the Sustainable Development in Government 1st and 2nd Annual Reports.

Online copies of all three reports can be found at: http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/reports/index.htm.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Judges' Instructions

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs on what basis the Home Secretary instructs judges to hold meetings with the public on their work. [159348]

Mr. Leslie: My right hon. friend the Home Secretary has not instructed the judiciary to hold meetings with the public. He and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State, hold the view that everyone invoived in the criminal justice system should engage closely with local communities, including judges and other members of the judiciary. Judges and magistrates already participate in court open days, court user groups and

work with schools. Through the Magistrates in the Community initiative, magistrates meet the community organisations across the country to discuss developments in the criminal justice system; and, with probation officers, have held similar meetings to explain and discuss community sentences. They will also be involved in the Courts Boards established under the new Unified Courts Administration to build better links between courts and the communities they serve.

Supreme Court

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Lord Chancellor has received a request to appear before the relevant committee in the Scottish Parliament to discuss the proposals for a UK supreme court. [162631]

Mr. Leslie: My right hon. and noble learned Friend the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor received an informal request on 3 March 2004 to appear before the Scottish Parliament's Justice 2 Committee, which is inquiring into the Constitutional Reform Bill. He declined in accordance with Devolution Guidance Note 12, Attendance of UK Ministers and Officials at Committees of the Devolved Legislatures.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Company Pension Schemes

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many company pension schemes declared insolvent have been notified to his Department in the last three years. [162835]

Malcolm Wicks: This information is not available. The currently available source of information on pension schemes is the Pension Schemes Registry, which is administered by the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority (Opra). Their database does not allow us to identify the solvency position of the sponsoring company of a pension scheme.

We are exploring with industry representatives the basis on which we can establish firm estimates of the number of defined benefit schemes which wind up because of insolvency.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many households had more than one person claiming disability living allowance on the latest date for which figures are available. [162611]

Maria Eagle: At April 2003, there were an estimated 100,000 households in Great Britain in which two or more people were receiving DLA.

Incapacity Benefit Payments

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women received incapacity benefit payments made on mental health grounds in each year since 1997 in relation to (i) depression and (ii) stress; and if he will break down these payments by region. [163051]

Maria Eagle: The information has been placed in the Library.

Industrial Injuries Report

Mrs. Liz Blackman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he has received the report from the Industrial Injuries Advisory Committee on its review of Prescribed Disease A11. [162310]

Mr. Browne: The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council report on Prescribed Disease A11 has now been received by Ministers and we will be considering its recommendations.

Maternity Allowance

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many families are eligible to receive maternity allowance. [158057]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available.

National Insurance Contributions (Women)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what legislation prevents women who paid reduced National Insurance contributions before 1986 from making up those payments; and if he will make a statement. [162200]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 18 March 2004]*: I have been asked to reply. A woman who had a valid reduced rate election in force before 1986 cannot pay voluntary Class 3 contributions to make up those payments. The relevant legislation is Regulation 132 of the Social Security (Contributions) Regulations 2001 (SI 2001 No. 1004). This regulation mirrored exactly Regulation 105 of Social Security (Contributions) Regulations 1979.

Parkinson's Disease

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people with Parkinson's disease who are of working age are in receipt of disability living allowance; and how many of this number are in receipt of the higher allowance. [162567]

Maria Eagle: As at 30 November 2003, some 5,700 people of working age whose main disabling condition is recorded as Parkinson's disease were receiving disability living allowance and, of these, around 4,100 were receiving either a higher rate care component or higher rate mobility component or both.

Note:
Figures taken from a 5 per cent. sample at 30 November 2003
Figures are in thousands and rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source:
IAD Information Centre

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people with Parkinson's disease received support from the Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisory Service in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003. [162568]

Maria Eagle: Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisers and Work Psychologists work with disabled jobseekers to help them overcome disability-related obstacles to work. They support people with a broad range of disabilities including Parkinson's Disease.

The information requested is not collected centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Pension Credit

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the estimated cost is of administering the pension credit in each of the first five years of its operation. [162683]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on the cost of administering Pension Credit is not currently available in the format requested. In accordance with the requirements of Resource Accounting and Budgeting the Department now accounts for its administration

and benefit expenditure by strategic objective, as set out in Public Service Agreements (PSA), and by individual Requests for Resources (RfRs), as set out in the Departmental Estimates and Accounts.

Pension Service (Telephone Calls)

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of telephone calls to *(a)* the pension credit application line and *(b)* the Pension Service which were not classed as engaged or abandoned were answered within 20 seconds in each month since it was established; how many and what percentage of attempted telephone calls to each reached an engaged tone in each month since it was established; and how many and what percentage of telephone calls to each were abandoned in each month since it was established. [160352]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in precisely the form requested. Such information as is available is shown in the tables 1–3.

Table 1: Calls to pension credit application line: April 2003–February 2004

	Calls answered within 30 seconds		*Calls receiving engaged tone or recorded message that all agents are busy*		*Calls abandoned*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
April 2003	17,675	94.29	0	0.00	975	4.69
May 2003	32,733	99.94	10	0.03	18	0.05
June 2003	57,731	99.95	1,790	2.88	386	0.64
July 2003	112,014	95.34	3,047	2.78	948	0.80
August 2003	177,338	97.51	7,255	3.87	313	0.17
September 2003	352,283	92.60	18,540	4.01	15,794	3.69
October 2003	429,954	95.20	2,854	0.62	13,370	2.77
November 2003	302,399	99.68	990	0.31	2,831	0.89
December 2003	183,646	99.78	32	0.02	1,165	0.60
January 2004	429,668	93.79	123	0.02	12,079	2.44
February 2004	372,932	92.71	185	0.04	11,839	2.73

Table 2: Calls to the Pension Service: September 2002–March 2003

	Calls answered		*Calls abandoned*		*Calls engaged*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
September 2002	403,784	92.1	35,357	8.0	3, 946	0.9
October 2002	460,373	92.1	40,091	7.9	5,394	1.1
November 2002	688,659	92.1	68,410	5.7	444,083	37.3
December 2002	522,656	89.1	67,391	7.2	344,485	37.0
January 2003	673,753	86.9	109,601	13.6	33,057	4.1
February 2003	607,083	89.3	74,174	6.2	514,357	43.1
March 2003	734,955	90.4	76,882	4.4	920,733	53.1

Table 3: Calls to the Pension Service: April 2003–January 2004

	Calls answered		*Calls answered within 30 seconds*		*Calls abandoned*		*Calls engaged*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
April 2003	567,101	91.1	n/a	n/a	71,947	7.8	303,825	32.8
May 2003	610,728	83.3	n/a	n/a	122,771	9.4	572,388	43.8
June 2003	750,360	86.6	n/a	n/a	116,575	10.2	278,937	24.3
July 2003	792,427	87.8	n/a	n/a	110,083	8.9	329,937	26.8
August 2003	704, 052	89.1	444,135	69.9	90,325	9.1	182,213	1.2
September 2003	882,761	90.1	535,341	68.2	97,195	9.0	99,611	1 .5
October 2003	1,043,354	94.5	664,233	78.1	58,062	5.2	5,961	0.1
November 2003	1,178,443	92.2	581,373	67.6	100,239	7.7	7,568	0.4
December 2004	1,097,450	93.0	519,152	70.1	78,984	6.6	1,283	0.1
January 2004	1,235,864	92.2	584,810	63.8	103,342	7.7	3,471	0.3

Notes:

1. In Table 1, the number of calls receiving the engaged tone or a recorded message was unusually high in September due to technical problems with the telephony at one particular site. The number of calls affected by these problems cannot be separated out.

2. The figures in Tables 2 and 3 do not include calls to the pension credit application line

3. For The pension service, numbers of calls answered within 30 seconds are only available from August 2003

4. In all three tables, the numbers of calls answered, abandoned and engaged are not calculated on precisely the same basis and in some cases the columns will add up to more than 100 per cent.

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the annual cost to public funds from April, net of savings in mean-tested benefits and additional income tax revenue, *(a)* of paying state pensions in full at the rate of a Category A pension to every UK pensioner aged between 65 and 74, regardless of their contribution record and *(b)* of paying a full basic state pension to each individual at the rate of the guarantee credit, regardless of contribution record, from the age of 75; and if he will estimate for *(b)* the cost in each of the following four years on the assumption that the pension was then indexed to earnings. [162682]

Malcolm Wicks: The annual additional cost to the Exchequer, net of additional income tax and savings in income related benefits of paying the full basic pension at the rate of a Category A pension to every GB pensioner aged between 65 and 74 is £2.1 billion.

The additional cost to the Exchequer of paying the basic state pension at the rate of the guarantee credit, regardless of contribution history, to all aged 75 and over is in the following table:

£ billion

	Net Cost
2004	4.4
2005	4.6
2006	4.9
2007	5.3
2008	5.6

Notes:

1. Figures are for Great Britain and in 2003–04 price terms rounded to the nearest £100 million. It is assumed the change comes into effect from April 2004 and payment is uprated in line with earnings thereafter.
2. Gross costs are estimated by the Government Actuary's Department and are consistent with Budget 2004 assumptions and use 2002 based population projections.
3. The costs take into account income related benefit offsets, which are calculated using the DWP policy simulation model and April 2004 benefit rates.
4. Additional income tax revenue is estimated by the Inland Revenue using 2004 tax rates.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of average male earnings the state retirement pension for a single person represented in each year from 1994 to 2004. [162177]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the format requested. However, such information as is available is set out in the table.

	Percentage
1995	19.8
1996	19.7
1997	19.9
1998	19.8
1999	19.3
2000	19.0
2001	18.9
2002	18.8
2003	18.9

1. All figures are provided from a 5 per cent. sample of DWP administrative data taken at March in each year, except March 1995 which is a 10 per cent. sample. We are only able to provide figures from March 1995 as the administrative data is not available before this point.
2. Neither administrative data nor earnings data for 2004 is available.
3. State pension is calculated as the maximum rate of basic state pension plus the average amount of additional pension in payment based on March administrative data for recently retired men aged 65.
4. Average earnings is the mean weekly earnings at April in each year, found in the Annual Abstract of Statistics published by the Department for Work and Pensions.
5. The figures have been rounded to the nearest 0.1 of a percentage point.

Winter Fuel Allowance

Peter Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people over *(a)* 60 years and *(b)* 80 years are in receipt of the winter fuel allowance in The Wrekin. [162774]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is as set out in the table below.

Winter Fuel Payment

	Number of people over 60	*Number of people over 80*
2003–04	17,116	3,220

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 percent sample.

Notes:

1. Figures taken from the Matching Intelligence Data Analysis Service Winter Fuels Payment 2003/2004 exercise 100 per data.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of *(a)* payment errors and *(b)* overpayments of winter fuel allowance to older people. [162074]

Malcolm Wicks: During winter 2002–03 some 11,356,000 winter fuel payments were made. About 0.4 per cent. (48,972) were incorrect. Those pensioners who were underpaid were sent further payments when the facts were established. In a very small proportion of cases there was overprovision because for example, some recipients' circumstances had changed or duplicate payments had been made in error.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Activity Co-ordination Team

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many times she has met the Secretary of State for Health to discuss the work of the Activity Co-ordination Team. [162164]

Mr. Caborn: The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the Secretary of State for Health have met formally on one occasion to discuss the work of the Activity Co-ordination Team. They are due to meet again at the end of March 2004.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what budget her Department has allocated to the work of the Activity Co-ordination Team. [162165]

Mr. Caborn: The Activity Co-ordination Team (ACT) has been established by Government to increase participation in sport and physical activity. ACT is not a funding body but will publish shortly a paper setting out proposals to tackle physical inactivity.

Broadcasting (Children)

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to her Answer of 4 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 163–4W on broadcasting (children), what representations she has received on establishing a national digital radio network for children; and if she will make a statement. [162090]

Estelle Morris: A number of representations have been received. However, as I explained in my Answer of 4 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 163–4, the licensing of commercial radio stations is a matter for Ofcom, and Ministers cannot intervene. Parties interested in establishing a national digital radio network for children should approach Ofcom and holders of the national and regional commercial digital sound multiplexes.

Departmental Scientific Adviser

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether her Department has a chief scientific adviser. [162482]

Estelle Morris: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has not appointed a chief scientific adviser. DCMS has access to a wide range of expert scientific and technological advice through its own economists and statisticians, its standing and ad hoc advisory groups, its sponsored bodies and other research and development partners. This advice is called upon as and when necessary to support policy-making activities and inform Ministerial deliberations.

Digital Television

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the level of take-up of digital television services has been from 1998 to the most recent date for which figures are available, broken down by region; and what steps have been taken since June 2003 to improve the collection and compilation of regional data. [161914]

Estelle Morris: This information is not available currently. Subscriber figures for the take up of digital television services are not available on a regional basis, as the data is commercially sensitive and therefore confidential to the pay television companies. However the Office for National Statistics hope to be able to produce figures on the level of take up of all digital television services on a regional basis in the future, and I understand Ofcom are compiling some estimates of regional take-up. The Department is currently having discussions on the possibility of commissioning research on the take-up of digital television services by region.

Film Making

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other assistance has been provided towards film making in (i) Greater London and (ii) England in each of the last five years. [162341]

Estelle Morris: The following table gives details of financial assistance towards film making in (i) Greater London (GL) and (ii) the rest of England (Eng) for the last five years. Prior to the establishment of the UK Film Council in April 2000, funding for film production was channelled through the British Film Institute's (BFI) production arm, the Arts Council of England (ACE) and British Screen Finance Limited. The UK Film Council took over responsibility for investing in film making from the date of its inception in April 2000.

Also, from 2001–02 an additional £7.5 million per year has been allocated to regional film development, and allocated through the Regional Screen Agencies. These have the promotion of film making as a core concern, but also assist training programmes and a wide range of other activities which work to promote film on a regional level.

In addition to the funding referred to above, the UK Film Council's film-making scheme for young people, First Light, has made 34 awards to projects in Greater London at a cost of £494,466, and awarded funding to an additional 120 projects in the rest of England at a cost of £1,250,765.

As well as financial assistance, the UK Film Council works to create the best possible environment for film-making in the UK. Examples of its activities include the joint establishment, with Skillset, last year of the first ever skills strategy for the film industry.

£

Funding agency for Film	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
BFI Production	[1]204,400				
	[2]688,300				
Arts Council of England (ACE)	[2]24,938,263				
British Screen Finance Ltd.	[2]4,000,000				
UK Film Council	—	[1]29,834,325	[1]24,600,413	[1]31,081,000	[1]27,107370
		[2]205,597	[2]870,318	[2]1,226,730	[2]1,638,350
Total	29,830,963	30,039,922	25,470731	32,307,730	28,745,720

[1] GL

[2] Eng

Notes:

A regional breakdown of ACE lottery awards for film production is not available due to the awards being grouped as national grants.

Figures for spend in England does not include the spend for Greater London.

Film funding is non location specific, i.e. an award can be made to production company based in London but the film itself could then be shot (and funding spent) on locations across England and the UK.

Libraries

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money has been spent on library *(a)* buildings and *(b)* books in (i) Lancashire and (ii) Chorley in each year since 1997. [162153]

Estelle Morris: Information on Lancashire's expenditure on premises is contained in the following table. It is based on the premises expenditure per thousand population and the population figures shown in the relevant annual Public Library Statistics volumes produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, copies of which are held in the House of Commons Library. These figures are not broken down below library authority level. 2001–02 are the latest "actual" figures available (figures for 2002–03 are only available as an estimate at present).

Expenditure on books in Lancashire and Chorley is shown in a further table. Figures relating directly to Chorley are not available; the figures below are based upon a best estimate provided by Lancashire County Council.

Expenditure on library premises

£

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Lancashire	2,017,800	1,782,384	1,674,801	1,873,020	1,970,360

Expenditure on books

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Lancashire						
Resources Fund (£)	3,202,933	2,389,655	2,256,429	2,432,519	2,447,138	2,569,364
Books (£)	2,643,901	1,960,919	1,818,357	1,861,551	1,795,926	1,936,070
Chorley (percentage)	6.85	8.61	8.62	8.70	8.85	8.88
Resources Fund (£)	219,401	205,749	194,504	211,629	216,572	228,160
Books (£)	181,107	168,835	156,742	161,955	158,939	171,923

National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the ideas sponsored by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts which have gone into commercial production. [162575]

Estelle Morris: Of 430 awards to date, 143 investments have been made through the Invention and Innovation Programme (which is the programme most relevant to commercial production). 40 projects have gone beyond the prototyping stage and have, therefore, a product or service that is available to buy. Of these 32 have actually sold a product.

The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) is an early stage investor, supporting projects long before they reach their production phase. As such, given that NESTA has only been in existence for five years, we would not expect most of their awardees to have reached the stage of commercial production.

The 32 projects that have achieved a sale are as follows. Projects details are available in the Annual Reports of NESTA that are laid before the House.

Project Name	*Individual*
Amphibious Vehicle	David Royle
Transition Sailing Rig	Dr. Richard Dryden
DECOi Ltd.	Mark Goulthorpe
Aquadraulics Ltd.	Michael Brisland
Walltransform	Glenn Melvin
MusicWheels 'a musical revolution'	Duncan Betts
Benchrover	Ian Stuart
Bacteria Detection in Food Borne Disease	Osborn Jones
DEVL Duddon Electronics Vehicle Logger	Eddie Clunan
Protein Music	Dr. Helen Linda Long
Moviposter	Michael Medora
Surface Monitoring Fluorimeter	David Ward
RoBAT	Colin Barker
Fueler	Mark Howarth
Combustion	Paul Cockle
Great British Theatre on Video	Robert Marshall
Kre8 SYSTEM	Stewart Dunn
Jericho Products	James Philips
WarpFilms Project	Steve Beckett
Anamorphic micro	Justin Thomas
Eyeball Swimming Pool Security	Richard Mansfield
The High Tide Organ	Liam Curtin
Seawater Greenhouse	Charlie Paton
PsychologyOnline	Sue Wright
Imprint Pharmaceuticals Limited	Kevin Maynard
Monitored Dosage System	David Fenn
Medipure Limited	Jim Daly
STesT Leak Radar	Mark Harper
Changing Handles for Good	Glen Heavenor
Hypertag	Jonathan Morgan
Safety Riding Wear	Vicky Sharpe
NanoSight Ltd.	Bob Carr

Opinion Sampling

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her estimate is of total expenditure by her Department on *(a)* focus groups and *(b)* opinion polls in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04; and if she will make a statement. [162753]

Mr. Caborn: Total annual Departmental expenditure on focus groups and opinion polling during the period between 1996–97 and 2003–04 was £29,820 on focus groups during 2001–02 and £34,662 and £74,701 on opinion polling during 2001–02 and 2002–03.

Police Transfers

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether an officer in the Royal Parks Constabulary who is within two years of retirement at age 60 years will be eligible for transfer to the Metropolitan police. [160347]

Mr. Caborn: Although the normal retirement age for Metropolitan police officers is 55, they may be granted annual extensions of service up to the age of 60 subject to the satisfaction of certain eligibility tests. An officer in the Royal Parks Constabulary who is 58 or over at the time the RPC is merged with the Metropolitan Police Service (which of course depends on the passage of the appropriate legislation, which has not yet been brought forward) will be considered for attestation as an MPS officer on this basis.

Running Tracks

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what grants have been made for running tracks in *(a)* Greater Manchester, *(b)* Merseyside, *(c)* Lancashire and *(d)* Cheshire in each year since 1997; and what the amounts were in each case. [162154]

Mr. Caborn:

Grants made for running tracks

	Cheshire	*Cumbria*	*Greater Manchester*	*Lancashire*	*Merseyside*
1997 Sum of Award (£)	—	—	2,768,000	—	—
Count of Award	—	—	1	—	—
1998 Sum of Award (£)	—	—	847,520	1,059,975	—
Count of Award	—	—	1	1	—
1999 Sum of Award (£)	4,152	1,944	—	3,500	—
Count of Award	1	1	—	1	—
2000 Sum of Award (£)	7,600	—	1,394	17,753	29,818
Count of Award	2	—	1	6	7
2001 Sum of Award (£)	15,662	7,097	—	20,989	4,890
Count of Award	4	2	—	5	1
2002 Sum of Award (£)	10,580	6,835	—	86,446	174,730
Count of Award	3	3	—	22	10
2003 Sum of Award (£)	407,464	13,307	223,285	139,250	55,208
Count of Award	7	4	3	19	4

The table shows Sport England Community athletics awards including the Community Capital and Community Athletics Refurbishment Programme grants, as well as Awards for All grants.

Science Strategy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she has taken to enhance science in her Department since the publication of the Government's science strategy Investing in Innovation. [162241]

Estelle Morris: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has responded to the science agenda outlined in "Investing in Innovation" in several ways since its publication in July 2002.

DCMS is the first department to take part in the cross-cutting review now being conducted by the Office for Science and Technology, which was advocated in the document. DCMS recognises that a number of its sponsored bodies, in particular the Natural History Museum and the Science Museums, have a key role to play in science education and can make major contributions to the Government's drive to improve further the quality of science teaching in schools and colleges, the scientific knowledge of young people entering the workforce, the image of science within society and the scientific understanding of the public generally.

In February 2003, the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) which is sponsored by DCMS, received an additional 50 million bringing its endowment up to 250 million and an extra 45 million to use as revenue expenditure until 2006. NESTA now plans to spend over 20 million a year on UK creativity and innovation in science, technology and the arts.

DCMS is continuing to develop a Research Strategy which coordinates social science research with our Non Departmental Public Bodies.

Sport Expenditure

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much her Department spent per capita in grant-in-aid for sport in England in each of the last five years. [162162]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture Media and Sport's grant-in-aid funding for Sport England in 1998–99 was £36.49 million, in 1999–2000 was £37.52 million, in 2000–01 was £38.32 million, in 2001–02 was £43.16 million and in 2002–03 was £80.32 million, as illustrated. These figures do not reflect the grant-in-aid funding which the Department provides to UK Sport.

	Grant-in-aid funding (£ million)	*Population totals (million)*	*Funding per capita (£)*
1998–99	36.49	48.7	0.75
1999–2000	37.52	48.9	0.77
2000–01	38.32	49.1	0.78
2001–02	43.16	49.3	0.87
2002–03	80.32	49.5	1.62

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will place in the Library the latest available research showing what each European Union member country spends in direct government expenditure per capita on sport. [162163]

Mr. Caborn: No direct comparison of government expenditure per capita on sport by European Union member states has been made by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport or the Sports Councils the Department funds. Meaningful comparisons are difficult because of the differences between the ways sport is structured and financed from country to country.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what funding has been provided to promote *(a)* hockey, *(b)* rugby, *(c)* soccer, *(d)* cricket and *(e)* other sports in Greater London in each of the last five years. [162342]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is in the following table.

£

	Hockey	*Rugby Union*	*Football*	*Cricket*	*Other Sports*
1999 Sum of Award	189,067	949,625	936,950	27,554	23,147,854
Count of Award	4	6	29	4	136
2000 Sum of Award	712,024	27,130	3,875,902	156,826	11,583,244
Count of Award	8	6	106	50	341
2001 Sum of Award	1,771,412	570,793	594,067	601,326	33,474,131
Count of Award	7	16	87	45	296
2002 Sum of Award	615,458	309,952	2,569,851	1,275,456	28,488,443
Count of Award	9	10	103	60	476
2003 Sum of Award	22,518	625,640	533,837	3,189,745	2,288,964
Count of Award	5	9	122	54	320

The table shows Sport England Lottery awards benefiting a number of schemes and programmes in London including the Safer Sports Grounds initiative, Active Sports, English Institute of Sport, Active Communities Development Fund, Sport Action Zones, Football Youth Development, Community Capital and Community Athletics Refurbishment Programme grants, as well as Awards for All grants.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much Lottery expenditure has been allocated to sporting projects in each of the past five years, broken down by Lottery distributor. [162166]

Estelle Morris: Money raised by the National Lottery specifically for Sport is distributed by five organisations, the Sports Councils in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and by UK Sport. The figures in the table, provided by the distributors for the DCMS Lottery Awards database show the figures requested.

£000

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
SE	256,787,756	281,896,436	322,534,774	200,525,814	49,348,483
SI	4,850,455	5,339,265	1,263,666	275,798	275,039
SS	16,814,905	23,316,761	26,155,900	22,321,475	13,840,748
SU	26,777,576	64,905,697	16,896,624	9,686,653	7,320,776
SW	4,060,990	13,171,753	7,367,111	26,937,069	7,324,815
Total	309,291,682	388,629,912	374,218,075	259,746,809	78,109,861

In addition to these totals, Lottery money is directed to sport projects through other channels. Awards for All is a scheme funded by all of the Lottery good causes, which makes small awards across the good cause sectors. In the financial year 2002/03, Sport England contributed 9.770m to this scheme and in the following year, £12.5m. Total Awards for All spend attributable sporting projects was £13.608m in 2002–03 and 15.581 in 2003–04.

Lottery money has also been spent on sporting projects by the New Opportunities Fund, which has a remit to award money in relation to health, education and the environment. The New Opportunities for PE and Sport programme has made awards of £32,343,179 in 2002–03 and £142,734,236 in 2003–04. The Active England programme has made £17,699,899 of awards in 2003–04.

Elements of other NOF programmes have also funded sport projects. The awards in the table have been made under the Playing Field and Community Green Spaces programme.

	£000
2001	765,432
2002	11,810,847
2003	15,322,777

Sport related projects have also been awarded Lottery money by NOF under the Out of School Hours Learning Programme, as in the table below.

	£000
1999	32,881,535
2000	56,987,670
2001	48,393,488
2002	13,815,153
2003	1,065,337

Sports (Honours)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the membership of the advisory committee responsible for recommending the

awarding of honours to persons involved in sport; what the background is of each member; how long each has served on the committee; what their sporting expertise is; and if she will make a statement. [161216]

Mr. Caborn: No. Information about advisory committees in the honours system and the advice they give is protected from disclosure under exemptions 2 and 8 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, and is not made public.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Alcohol Addiction

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were receiving treatment for alcohol addiction in Northern Ireland on 1March; what facilities are available in Northern Ireland for the treatment of alcoholics; and if he will make a statement. [161896]

Angela Smith: On 1 March there were approximately 2,966 persons receiving treatment for alcohol misuse. It is not possible to give an absolute figure because some individuals may have a co-morbid diagnosis of alcohol and drug dependence.

A range of treatment options is provided by the statutory and voluntary sector. These include community based detoxification, counselling, residential treatment and after care. A comprehensive Review of all Mental Health services is currently under way—part of this Review involves looking at those services specifically allocated to problem drug and alcohol users. Decisions about future services for such users will continue to be based on the assessment of clinical need mindful of current good practice and appropriate guidelines.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to minimise antisocial behaviour in *(a)* accident and emergency departments and *(b)* hospitals in general; and if he will make a statement. [161680]

Angela Smith: The Department is extremely concerned about violent attacks against any staff working in the Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS), including attacks on staff in accident and emergency departments and in hospitals in general. The Department regards such attacks as totally unacceptable and will be launching a campaign shortly to raise public awareness that violent acts against staff working in the HPSS will not be tolerated, that violence against staff is a crime and that the perpetrators could face a prison sentence.

Cattle Tagging

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cattle in Northern Ireland have been re-tagged during the past two years owing to the animals losing their identification tags. [162801]

Mr. Pearson: The number of animals re-tagged in Northern Ireland during the past two years are as shown in the following table:

	Number of cattle re-tagged
2002	36,450
2003	19,787

Diabetes Services

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) whether the implementation team to produce the implementation plan for the Diabetes Service Framework in Northern Ireland has been established; and if he will make a statement; [162725]

(2) what timescale has been set for the production of an implementation strategy for the Diabetes Service Framework in Northern Ireland. [162734]

Angela Smith: It has been decided that the Department will manage the implementation process for the Diabetes Service Framework through the local groups established by the four HSS Boards rather than add a further level of bureaucracy by establishing a Regional Implementation Team.

An additional £1 million has been made available to Boards in 2004–05 to begin the implementation process and the Department has requested that the local groups identify and take forward prioritised recommendations within a framework which is to be agreed with the Department by May 2004

Fair Employment Exemptions

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what exemptions are in place in Northern Ireland from equal fair employment laws; and whether these exemptions are from *(a)* United Kingdom, *(b)* European and *(c)* international law. [156671]

Mr. Spellar: The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 provides for the following exemptions:

Employment or occupation as a clergyman or minister of religion;

Employment where the essential nature of the job requires it to be done by a person holding/not holding a particular religious belief or political opinion ('genuine occupational requirement');

Recruitment of schoolteachers;

Selection of persons for appointment as police trainees or for certain posts in police support staff;

Actions done in pursuance of affirmative action (e.g. training, selection for redundancy, encouragement of applications from under-represented communities, selection of unemployed persons;

Religion specific training for non-employees;

Conferring of benefits by a charity on persons of a particular religious belief or political opinion;

Acts done in order to comply with existing legislation;

Provision of accommodation in, or disposal of shared small dwellings;

Care provided in family home where persons are treated as family members;

Goods, facilities or services provided by a religious denomination or political party to persons of a particular religion or political opinion (or none);

Goods, facilities or services provided by schools, colleges of education or theological training colleges;

Acts done for the purposes of safeguarding national security or protecting public safety or public order;

Private sale of land or premises.

The Government is satisfied that these exemptions accord with UK law generally, with EU law and with the UK's international obligations.

Illiteracy

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his latest assessment is of the levels of illiteracy in Northern Ireland, broken down by age group. [161285]

Jane Kennedy: Research to date has focused on measuring levels of literacy and at present no data are available which specifically identifies the levels of illiteracy.

The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) which was conducted in 1996 indicated that 24 per cent. of the adult population in Northern Ireland performed at the lowest level of literacy, level 1.

Of those adults performing at the lowest level of literacy:

20 per cent. were aged between 16–25;

16 per cent. were aged between 26–35;

21 per cent. were aged between 36–45; and

43 per cent. were aged over 45.

IVF Treatment

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many couples received IVF treatment on the NHS in Northern Ireland in the last five years for which figures are available; what the average length of treatment was; and if he will make a statement on IVF provision in Northern Ireland. [161290]

Angela Smith: The interim sub-fertility service was established in December 2001, making specialist treatments such as IVF available for the first time in Northern Ireland as part of a publicly-funded fertility service. Prior to that date IVF treatment in Northern Ireland was available only on a private basis.

It is not possible to provide precise data on the number of couples that have received IVF treatment as the data collected refers to treatment cycles provided rather than couples treated. The following table sets out the number of IVF treatment cycles commissioned since the establishment of the interim sub-fertility service.

	Number of IVF cycle commissioned
2001–02	147
2002–03	131
2003–04	207

Data are not collected on the average length of treatment.

A consultation document and equality impact assessment on the future of sub-fertility services were issued for public consultation on 13 October 2003. In developing the paper, my Department worked closely with commissioners, providers and users of fertility services, to discuss issues and concerns. The consultation period closed on 30 January. The outcome of the consultation process will inform final decisions on the future provision of fertility services in Northern Ireland to be made later this year.

Key Stage 3

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what opportunity Key Stage 3 of the education curriculum will provide for all children to participate in physical activity. [161683]

Jane Kennedy: The current statutory curriculum at Key Stage 3 includes Physical Education as one of the compulsory subjects. Final decisions have not yet been made about the content of the revised curriculum. However, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has proposed that there will be a requirement for all children to undertake a programme of physical activity. It is also proposed that this will continue into Key Stage 4.

Killyleagh Development

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much Northern Ireland departments intend to invest in Killyleagh in the next year. [158532]

Mr. Pearson: Details of the amounts that departments in the Northern Ireland administration (including Agencies and non-departmental public bodies) intend to invest in Killyleagh in the next financial year are shown as follows.

	Details	*£000*
Rivers Agency	Replacement of culvert in Shrigley, Killyleagh.	5
Roads Service	Footpath from the Comber Road Estate to St. Mary's School.	10
	Surface dressing for the Innishbeg and Kerrywynn Estates.	10
	Surface dressing on the A22 Comber Road, from River Bridge to Comber Road Estate.	5
Housing Association Grant	Over the next three years, a grant of 341,000 will be provided for a new build housing scheme of four units for general needs accommodation. Clanmil Housing Association will provide these units at Frederick Street, Killyleagh.	137
Housing Executive	Variety of projects including improvements, repairs, adaptations and maintenance.	510

Libraries

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* public libraries and *(b)* mobile library units there were within each Education and Library Board district in Northern Ireland in each year since 2000; and if he will make a statement on public library usage in Northern Ireland. [161287]

Angela Smith: The following table sets out details of public libraries and mobile library units in each Education and Library Board area since 2000. We can be justifiably proud of our public library service that is regularly used by people of all ages and social classes. While the trend in traditional library usage has been declining in recent years, the most recent published figures show that in 2001–02 approximately 7 million visits were made to public libraries in Northern Ireland. Since the installation of the Peoples Network during 2002–03, indications are that membership of public libraries has been increasing but as yet official figures are not available.

	2000–01		*2001–02*		*2002–03*	
	Branches	*Mobiles*	*Branches*	*Mobiles*	*Branches*	*Mobiles*
Belfast	21	3	21	3	21	3
North Eastern	36	8	37	8	37	8
South Eastern	26	5	26	5	26	5
Southern	23	7	23	7	23	7
Western	16	9	16	9	16	9
Total	122	32	123	32	123	32

This table excludes the Irish Studies Centre, Coleraine, the Local Studies Unit, Ballymena and the Irish Studies Centre in Armagh.

Multiple Sclerosis

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to increase provision for multiple sclerosis sufferers in *(a)* North Down and *(b)* Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [161888]

Angela Smith: Over 500 patients in Northern Ireland are receiving beta interferon treatment and there are around 65 on the waiting list. These figures include 198 patients receiving beta interferon in the Eastern Health and Social Services Board area, with funding available for a further 12 patients.

Additional £100,000 recurrent funding was provided last year to boost the Northern Ireland infrastructure for the delivery of these medicines, including the appointment of additional pharmacists, technician support and specialist nurses who are now in post. Additional consultants have been appointed and Regional joint medical/nursing clinics are also being set up. The Ulster Hospital, covering the North Down area, is working with the Royal Victoria Hospital to develop a joint plan for a shared additional consultant neurologist post. A consultation service for multiple sclerosis patients is expected to be up and running there within the next 12 months.

Rail Services

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland with what frequency safety inspections are carried out on Translink rolling stock, broken down by type. [161893]

Mr. Spellar: I have been advised by Translink that:

(a) bogey inspections are carried out on all rolling stock every 48 hours;

(b) 450 and 80 Class rolling stock and ex-Gatwick Express carriages are inspected every 5,000 miles;

(c) Enterprise carriages are inspected every 24 hours and a weekly examination is also carried out; and

(d) locomotives are inspected every three months.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which organisation is responsible for the *(a)* inspection and *(b)* maintenance of railway lines in Northern Ireland; how often safety inspections are carried out on railway lines in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [161894]

Mr. Spellar: Northern Ireland Railways is responsible for the inspection and maintenance of railway lines in Northern Ireland. Primarily Northern Ireland Railway's own labour force carries out maintenance, with input from specialist contractors as required for technical or volume reasons. I have been advised by Translink that the inspection regime is as follows:

Track

Jointed track is visually inspected every other day, Monday-Friday.

Continually welded track is inspected weekly.

Supervisory inspections are carried out at least half yearly.

Technical condition of track is recorded twice yearly.

Structures

Sea defences are inspected annually.

Rock slopes are inspected monthly.

Bridges are inspected visually during track walks and structurally on an annual basis.

Signalling equipment

All signalling equipment is inspected four times per year.

Additional inspections are carried out after incidents such as severe weather and where impact damage has occurred.

Civil Servants

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of recruitment of civil servants for the Department was in each financial year since 1996–97, broken down by *(a)* delegated or contracted out recruitment procedures and *(b)* recruitment procedures carried out by the Department. [158185]

Mr. Pearson: Most recruitment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service, including NICS staff seconded to Northern Ireland Office is carried out by the Department of Finance and Personnel. Expenditure by the Department on recruitment services is as follows:

	£ million
2001–02	3.5
2002–03	1.5
2003–04	1.4

Information on expenditure before 2001–02 and on expenditure by other Departments is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Smacking

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many responses to the Office of Law Reform's consultation Physical Punishment in the Home supported *(a)* the law as it stands, *(b)* a change in the law to restrict smacking by parents and *(c)* a change in the law to completely ban smacking by parents. [161892]

Mr. Pearson: "The Office of Law Reform's Consultation Paper—"Physical Punishment in the Home—Thinking about the Issues, Looking at the Evidence" generated a huge amount of interest and attracted almost 1,700 responses.

Officials have now completed an analysis of those responses and are aiming to publish that analysis, which contains the information requested, in the next few weeks. A copy of the analysis will be placed on the Office of Law Reform's website and I will arrange for a hard copy to be forwarded on as soon as it becomes available."

Speed Cameras

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many speeding detections were made by *(a)* hand held and *(b)* permanent cameras between March 2003 and February 2004, broken down by (A) parliamentary constituency and (B) council area; and how many convictions resulted in each case. [160320]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Chief Constable has advised me that speed cameras are not located as a result of parliamentary constituency or council area. They are used to enforce speed restrictions in all areas of the Province where there is a history of road traffic collisions resulting in fatalities and serious injuries or where there is evidence of speeding.

The number of speeding detections made in 2003 are:

Hand held devices = 23,840

Permanent (fixed) cameras = 5,772

The detections broken down by police districts are:

DCU	*Hand held devices*	*Fixed cameras*
Antrim	869	—
Newtownards	937	—
East Belfast	831	1,656
North Belfast	547	445
South Belfast	954	—
West Belfast	127	162
Carrickfergus	542	—
Castlereagh	1,865	3,509
Larne	298	—
Lisburn	748	—
Newtownabbey	652	—
North Down	1,126	—
Armagh	497	—
Ballymena	1,898	—
Ballymoney	661	—
Banbridge	2,182	—
Coleraine	719	—
Cookstown	324	—
Craigavon	1,419	—
Down	769	—
Dungannon	459	—
Fermanagh	873	—
Foyle	1,090	—
Limavady	564	—
Magherafelt	762	—
Moyle	10	—
Newry and Mourne	1,200	—
Omagh	614	—
Strabane	303	—

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the location of each permanent speed camera in Northern Ireland was between March 2003 and February 2004; how many detections were made by each camera; how many convictions were made as a result; and how much money was generated through speeding fines from each camera. [160321]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Chief Constable has advised me that the information is not available in the format requested however, the locations of the four fixed speed cameras and the number of detections in 2003 are:

	Number
Saintfield Road, Belfast	3,509
Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast	1,656
Antrim Road, Belfast	445
Springfield Road	162

It is not possible to say how many convictions resulted as the disposal of detections is accomplished in different ways.

From July 2003 to January 2004 a total of £461,753 has been collected.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many speed cameras were operated by the Police Service of Northern Ireland between March 2003 and February 2004, broken down by *(a)* parliamentary constituency and *(b)* council area. [160323]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Chief Constable has advised me that speed cameras are not located by parliamentary constituency or council area but are located to enforce speed restrictions in all areas of the Province where there is a history of road traffic collisions resulting in fatalities and serious injuries or where there is evidence of speeding.

The number of fixed speed cameras in operation by the Police Service is as follows:

Fixed cameras location	*Police DCU*
Saintfield Road, Belfast	Castlereagh area
Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast	East Belfast area
Antrim Road, Belfast	North Belfast area
Springfield Road, Belfast	West Belfast area

In addition there are eight mobile speed cameras, which operate across all of Northern Ireland.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fixed speed cameras are in operation in Northern Ireland; how many new cameras are planned; how many drivers were caught speeding in each of the last five years; what revenue was raised as a result; where that revenue went; and what assessment he has made of the extent to which these cameras have contributed to a reduction in occurrence of road accidents caused by speeding. [156100]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Four fixed site safety cameras came into operation in Northern Ireland on 1 July 2003 and installation of a further six to 10 fixed cameras is planned in the next six months. A total of 461,753 has been collected and so far all receipts have been passed to the UK Consolidated Fund.

Over the last five years 138,044 motorists have been detected by all forms of speed detection equipment for excess speed as follows:

	Number
1999	24,696
2000	25,222
2001	28,659
2002	29,855
2003	29,612

It is too early to evaluate the effect of the safety camera scheme in terms of the Government's road casualty reduction targets but indications are that there has been a considerable reduction in speeds at a fixed camera location.

Union Flag

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the flying of the Union flag on public buildings on designated days when the Union flag is flown on Government buildings in Northern Ireland. [162408]

Mr. Spellar: The flying of the Union flag from buildings wholly or mainly occupied by members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service is regulated by the Flags Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000. The flying of the Union flag from all other public buildings is a matter for the public authority concerned.

University of Ulster (Car Clamping)

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* personnel and *(b)* financial resources have been required to deal with the decision of the University of Ulster to introduce car clamping at the campuses of (i) Jordanstown, (ii) Coleraine and (iii) Londonderry; what the impact has been upon the host communities at each location; and what steps he is taking to ensure that the costs incurred by the Police Service of Northern Ireland as a result of this policy will be recouped from the university. [160241]

Jane Kennedy: The University of Ulster, which is an autonomous institution responsible for its own policies and practices introduced vehicle clamping due to the lack of ordered parking, which involved, for example, parking in spaces reserved for the disabled, on verges, at corners and other areas marked by double yellow lines, and in ways which dangerously restricted access to entrances and exits. The new arrangements have been put in place to prevent such inconvenience and danger to car park users and have been very successful.

The University is deeply conscious of the importance of good relations with local residents and has sought the co-operation of both staff and students in not parking in the streets surrounding the University campuses.

No significant costs have been incurred by the University because clamping is carried out by an external company.

At Jordanstown, it has been necessary for the police, on a number of occasions, to deploy traffic wardens adjacent to the complex. They have issued in the region of 315 fixed penalty tickets since September 2003.

At Coleraine and Londonderry there has been minimal impact on local police resources as any illegal parking is dealt with by the local police in the normal course of their duty. It is therefore not possible to provide an estimation of costs.

HEALTH

Allergies

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research has been *(a)* conducted and *(b)* commissioned by his Department into the possible links between environmental pollution and allergies. [159938]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department is funding research on air pollution and asthma under its Policy Research Programme. Current work focuses on two areas:

potential confounding effects of allergens in ambient air in determining the effects of air pollution as asthma exacerbations;

effects of other air pollutants on patients with asthma.

A report on air pollution and asthma by the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants is expected to be published in 2005.

Bounty

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that data collected from new mothers by Bounty is *(a)* subject to the Data Protection Act and *(b)* not passed on for commercial reasons. [161730]

Dr. Ladyman: It is not the role of the Department to regulate private organisations' compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Any concerns about whether Bounty is complying with the Data Protection Act 1998 should be raised directly with the Office of the Information Commissioner.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money the NHS has received from Bounty this year; and how much it has received in kind. [161731]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected centrally.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take steps to ensure that cotton nappies are available in all packs given to mothers of new-born babies. [161729]

Dr. Ladyman: Bounty is a commercial company who distributes packs containing free samples and leaflets to pregnant and recently delivered women. Decisions to include cotton nappies in these packs are a matter for Bounty and individual manufacturers of cotton nappies.

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that Bounty bags distributed to new mothers through NHS facilities do not include products which *(a)* adversely affect the health of babies, *(b)* increase costs to the NHS through charges for the disposal of clinical waste and *(c)* adversely impact on Government targets for the disposal of clinical waste; and if he will make a statement. [160981]

Dr. Ladyman: Bounty is a commercial organisation that distributes packs containing information and product samples to pregnant and recently delivered women. The Government have received no evidence to suggest that the products contained in the packs adversely affect the health of babies. Information on costs to the national health service through charges for the disposal of clinical waste as a result of the Bounty pack contents and the impact on Government targets on disposal of clinical waste are not collected centrally.

Care Homes

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the timetable is for the development of *(a)* accessible and *(b)* understandable information about care homes to enable consumers to make more informed choices. [161832]

Dr. Ladyman: Since 1 April 2002, all care homes have been required, under the Care Homes Regulations and National Minimum Standards, to make plain and accessible information available to residents in an appropriate format. This includes information about the accommodation and services provided by each establishment. The National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) is responsible for regulating care homes to ensure they meet the regulations and standards.

The NCSC makes available a register of all the services it regulates including details of each establishment and the types of care the service is registered to provide. It publishes reports of the majority of announced and unannounced inspections of regulated services (with exceptions being reports on children's services for child protection reasons). These are available to members of the public both via the internet and in printed form.

The NCSC will publish before the end of March 2004 its findings of analysis of performance of care homes in meeting the National Minimum Standard on Information to give a national picture of the quality of information provided by care services.

The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) will take over the functions of the NCSC from 1 April 2004. I understand that CSCI is developing a key corporate objective to ensure, over the next two to three years, that the maximum possible information is available for people in accessible form.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will delay the implementation of the requirement for care home managers to have an NVQ qualification. [162374]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The Government has no plans to postpone the requirement for care home managers to have a National Vocational Qualification by 2005.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received regarding the simplification of the Statement of Purpose that care homes are required to produce. [162375]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The Department has not made any changes to the regulations relating to the Statement of Purpose (SOP) for care homes and we have not received any representations. The SOP contains essential information that assists inspectors in their inspections and is prescribed in regulation. Inspectors will need to take into account the types of service being operated—single businesses or large corporations—when making judgments about the suitability of SOP produced.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received regarding a reduction in the number of inspections required each year by care homes. [162376]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not received any representations regarding a reduction in the number of inspections required each year by care homes.

Change Agent Team

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the work of the Change Agent Team. [162315]

Dr. Ladyman: The health and social care change agent team was established two years ago. The team has worked with councils and their National Health Service partners, supporting them to plan and deliver measurably improved services for older people. Changing Places: Report on the work of the Health and Social Care Change Agent Team 2002/3 was published in July 2003 and is available in the Library and at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/TertiaryCare/ChangeAgentTeam/fs/en.

Charges Revenue

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total revenue was from *(a)* eye test charges, *(b)* dental check charges, *(c)* all other dental charges and *(d)* prescription charges in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [156708]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There is no charge levied for sight tests under the National Health Service, which are provided free to children, people on low incomes and those at particular risk of eye disease. In 1999, we introduced free sight tests under the NHS to people aged 60 and over.

The information requested on dental charges is shown in table 1 for patient charge revenue (PCR) from the general dental services. The patient charge revenue from examinations covers all categories of patient examinations, including complex examinations. Charges are also collected in personal dental service pilots and for certain limited categories of dental treatment in community and hospital dental services, but detailed data on charge income in these areas is not collected centrally.

Table 1

£ million

	Total PCR	*PCR from examinations*	*PCR for other treatments (excluding PCR from examinations)*
1998–99	420.0	73	347.4
1 999–2000	432.2	77	355.5
2000–01	453,4	81	372.2
2001–02	470.0	85	385.1
2002–03	481.6	88	393.6

Income from prescription charges from 1998–1999 to 2002–03 is shown in table 2.

Table 2

	Income from charges (England)
1998–99	341
1 999–2000	367
2000–01	389
2001–02	408
2002–03	423

Dentistry

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentures the NHS provided in each year since 2000–01. [161373]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since the National Health Service was founded over 50 years ago, there has been a real and sustained improvement in oral health. Since the 1960s the proportion of adults with no natural teeth has fallen by 65 per cent. and adults with natural teeth now have on average 14 per cent. more.

Information on the number of dentures provided by the NHS is shown in the table for the general dental service (GDS) and personal dental service (PDS) for England, from the year ending March 2000 to the year ending March 2003.

Number of dentures provided by the NHS

	Year ending March			
Type of treatment	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
GDS				
Full upper and lower denture	177,880	165,928	153,647	135,531
Full upper or lower denture	105,927	102,217	97,531	95,935
Partial denture[1]	409,090	419,455	409,679	405,088
PDS	6,025	9,083	13,141	18,305
Total	698,922	696,683	673,998	654,858

[1] There may be several partial dentures in a single combination

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Health from whom dentists from EU accession states can obtain details of the procedure for obtaining accreditation to *(a)* set up in private practice and *(b)* to qualify for employment within the NHS; whether this information is available on a website; and if he will make a statement. [161983]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 17 March 2004]:* Dentists from European Union accession states will need to contact the General Dental Council to get details of the procedure for registration in the United Kingdom. Advice on English language requirements necessary to practise in the National Health Service is provided on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/Dental.

The National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Dental Education also offers relevant advice. Its website is: www.rcseng.ac.uk/fds/nacpde.

Diabetes

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the total amount of funding provided for diabetes services has been allocated to paediatric diabetes services in *(a)* Gedling, *(b)* Broxtowe, *(c)* Rushcliffe, *(d)* Nottingham City South and *(e)* Melton, Rutland and Harborough Primary Care Trusts in the last year; and what amounts those proportions were. [162398]

Dr. Ladyman: It is for primary care trusts (PCTs) in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services. Allocations for PCTs were announced on 11 December 2002 and further details can be found at http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/FinanceAndPlanning/Allocations/fs/en.

DXA Scans

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for DXA scans was *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by strategic health authority in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [161922]

Dr. Ladyman: Waits for diagnostic services are not recorded nationally.

The Government is committed to improving access to diagnostic services and the Department is working in partnership with strategic health authorities (SHAs) and other stakeholders to secure a more responsive

service. Each SHA is responsible for developing and implementing local improvement programmes for diagnostic services and to monitor progress against any locally agreed objectives.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals are equipped to perform DXA scans *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by strategic health authority; and if he will make a statement. [161923]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected centrally.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average distance travelled by patients in need of a DXA scan has been since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [161924]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected centrally.

Ebixa

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) which NHS trusts make the drug Ebixa available for people with dementia on the NHS; and which do not; [162293]

(2) if he will make it his policy to ensure that Ebixa is available, on prescription, to all people suffering from dementia regardless of the NHS trust area in which they live. [162294]

Dr. Ladyman: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) is appraising Memantine (Ebixa) as part of the eighth wave of its work programme. The anticipated publication date of its guidance is May 2005.

The Department has asked National Health Service bodies (in HSC 1999/176) to continue with local arrangements for the managed introduction of new technologies, including drugs such as Memantine (Ebixa), where guidance from NICE is not published at the time the technology first became available. These arrangements should involve an assessment of all the available evidence.

Information about which NHS trusts are prescribing Memantine (Ebixa) is not collected centrally, but data collected about prescriptions dispensed in the community shows that Memantine (Ebixa) has been prescribed on the NHS in all strategic health authorities.

Epilepsy

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the availability of *(a)* advice on and *(b)* assistance with the ketogenic diet offered by the NHS. [161039]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 12 March 2004]*: It is for primary care trusts, in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services. , This will include responsibility for decisions on the availability of the ketogenic diet and of advice on and assistance with it.

Breast Cancer

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what percentage of women in Buckingham with suspected breast cancer saw a specialist within two weeks in each of the last seven years. [161566]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table. However, data are only available from 1999–2000.

Waiting times for patients referred urgently by their GP with suspected breast cancer to first out-patient appointment: NHS Trusts in Buckinghamshire

Quarter/NHS Trust	Percentage of patients seen in two weeks	Total patients seen	Patients seen in two weeks
1999–2000			
Quarter 1			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	94	49	46
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	96	82	79
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	100	61	61
Quarter 2			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	100	25	25
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	94	87	82
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	100	51	51
Quarter 3			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	100	49	49
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	95	100	95
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	100	68	68
Quarter 4			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	100	41	41
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	93	97	90
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	98	117	115
2000–01			
Quarter 1			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	97	59	57
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	94	108	101
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	100	90	90
Quarter 2			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	92	59	54
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	94	83	78
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	99	93	92
Quarter 3			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	90	79	71
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	98	85	83
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	99	121	120
Quarter 4			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	92	53	49
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	99	113	112
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	100	101	101
2001–02			
Quarter 1			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	100	78	78
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	89	102	91
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	96	121	116
Quarter 2			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	100	51	51
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	65	112	73
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	98	91	89
Quarter 3			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	100	96	96
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	99	106	105
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	94	124	116
Quarter 4			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	100	78	78
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	100	94	94
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	100	96	96
2002–03			
Quarter 1			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	94	93	87
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	95	103	98
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	100	114	114

Waiting times for patients referred urgently by their GP with suspected breast cancer to first out-patient appointment: NHS Trusts in Buckinghamshire

Quarter/NHS Trust	Percentage of patients seen in two weeks	Total patients seen	Patients seen in two weeks
Quarter 2			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	96	80	77
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	100	106	106
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	100	116	116
Quarter 3			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	97	93	90
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	100	124	124
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	100	126	126
Quarter 4			
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	100	72	72
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	98	124	122
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	100	124	124
2003–04			
Quarter 1			
Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust	100	236	235
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	100	67	67
Quarter 2			
Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust	99	263	261
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	100	80	80
Quarter 3			
Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust	100	322	322
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust	100	104	104

Source:
Department of Health form QMCW.

Hormone Replacement Therapy

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many women in England were prescribed hormone replacement therapy, broken down by drug type, in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [161928]

Dr. Ladyman: We do not know how many women in England are prescribed hormone replacement therapy (HRT). The information that is available is on the number of prescription items of HRT that are dispensed in the community in England. This is shown in the table.

Number of prescription items of Oestrogens and HRT drugs that were dispensed in the community in England, 1997–2002

thousands

Chemical Entity	Number of prescription items					
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Estradiol	1,139.6	1,164.7	1,176.4	1,186.4	1,202.6	1,167.1
Estradiol and Estriol	—	—	—	0.0	0.0	—
Estradiol and Estriol with Progestogen	166.7	142.0	118.8	101.6	86.3	69.8
Estradiol Valerate	244.2	258.5	271.7	282.7	291.4	283.2
Estradiol with Cyproterone Acetate	—	—	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Estradiol with Progestogen	1,228.8	1,337.4	1,426.5	1,552.3	1,638.5	1,597.3
Estradiol, Estriol and Estrone	76.1	76.4	69.9	68.4	68.2	63.6
Estriol	1.9	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.2	2.1
Estropipate	63.7	58.9	56.4	52.0	46.6	39.6
Estropipate with Progestogen	3.4	3.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	—
Ethinylestradiol	36.2	32.3	30.2	28.1	26.5	23.9
Mestranol With Progestogen	16.2	13.7	7.3	0.1	—	0.0
Oestrogens Conjugated	1,120.5	1,101.0	1,091.5	1,080.9	1,058.5	976.3
Oestrogens Conjugated with Progestogen	1,409.2	1,392.6	1,355.8	1,317.5	1,269.8	1,113.3
Oestrogens Esterified With Androgen	—	—	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Preparations	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	—	—
Raloxifene Hydrochloride	—	4.1	43.4	79.9	119.0	160.7
Tibolone	334.3	349.0	387.5	425.4	454.3	464.2
Total for Oestrogens and HRT	5,840.8	5,935.6	6,038.2	6,177.5	6,263.8	5,961.0

Notes:
1. Oestrogens and HRT are defined as those drugs within the British National Formulary (BNF) paragraph 6.4.1.1.
2. The data are from the Prescription Cost Analysis system and cover all prescription items dispensed in the community in England. Information on items dispensed in hospitals or private prescriptions is not available.
3. "—" indicates no data. 0.0 indicates less than 50 items were dispensed.

Source:
Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) data from the Prescription Pricing Authority (PPA)

Hospitals (Body Disposal Procedures)

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether NHS hospital staff are obliged to see green forms issued by a registrar of births, marriages and deaths prior to the release of a body; [159965]

(2) what powers NHS staff have to prevent the release of a body from a hospital solely because funeral arrangements have not been made; [159999]

(3) under what powers staff in the NHS must release the bodies of those who die in hospitals. [160000]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answers 15 March 2004]:* The Department recognises how important it is that national health service staff are sensitive to the needs of people who die in hospital and the relatives of dying or deceased patients. Guidance to the NHS on the need to ensure this (HSG(92)8, "Patients who die in hospital" and its supplementary guidance HSG(97)43) was published in 1992 and 1997, respectively.

However, the law governing the disposal of bodies is complex. When a patient dies in hospital, the trust chief executive has lawful possession[1] of the body until

someone with better title claims the body. This can include a coroner, whose powers can override the right of the next of kin to call for possession of the body. Hospital authorities must, therefore, ensure that a body is not, and will not be, the subject of a coroner's inquiry before releasing it.

Additionally, any death in England and Wales must be reported to the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths for the sub-district in which the death occurred[2]. The person registering the death receives the Registrar's Certificate of Burial or Cremation (commonly known as the "Green Form"), which authorises disposal of a body, so that it can then be given to the person disposing of the body (usually, but not necessarily, the undertaker).

National guidance therefore highlights the need for NHS trusts to document the movement of, and identify, bodies correctly before transferring them to relatives or undertakers. This guidance is currently being updated following the Chief Medical Officer's recommendation in his report, "The Removal, Retention and Use of Human Organs and Tissue from Post-Mortem Examination" (2001).

In line with "Shifting the Balance of Power", it is the responsibility of the NHS to interpret how best to follow such guidance, in accordance with local circumstances.

[1] Section 1 (7) of the Human Tissue Act 1961.

[2] Section 15, Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 and Regulation 41 of the Registration of Births and Deaths Regulations 1987.

Marlow Day Hospital

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many responses have been received from patients in relation to recent consultations carried out at Marlow Day Hospital. [162427]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The Marlow Day Hospital closed on 28 November 2003, following a six-week internal consultation process with staff as prescribed in the trust's human resources policies. In view of the plan to re-provide an equivalent service for the population of Marlow at the other day hospitals based at Wycombe Hospital and Amersham Hospital, there was no formal public consultation during this period.

Marlow Community Hospital, which is on the same site but managed by Wycombe Primary Care Trust, was unaffected by this change of service.

Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Head of Enforcement at the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has a *(a)* past and *(b)* present connection with the pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline. [162490]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The head of medicines inspection and enforcement at the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency was employed from 1970 until 1997 by Glaxo, latterly Glaxo Wellcome. He has no present connections with Glaxo Smith Kline.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many specialists in myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) are employed in the NHS; how many sufferers from ME there are in *(a)* each of the Wakefield primary care trusts, *(b)* West Yorkshire and *(c)* the UK; what diagnostic tests for ME are recommended to general practitioners by the Department; and if he will make a statement. [162157]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not collect numbers of specialists in myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME).

The Department does not routinely collect statistics on the prevalence of individual conditions like ME. The report of the independent chronic fatigue syndrome/ myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME) working group, published in January 2002, estimated a population prevalence of around 0.2 to 0.4 per cent. in adults and around 0.07 per cent. in children.

We have asked the National Institute for Clinical Excellence to develop a clinical guideline for the diagnosis and management of CFS/ME. The report of the independent CFS/ME working group, published in January 2002, provides a source of advice to general practitioners on recognition of this debilitating and distressing condition.

Older People (Medication)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what representations he has received on poor concordance with medication for older people living in sheltered housing; [161937]

(2) what monitoring is undertaken by his Department of the medication of older people with particular reference to *(a)* concordance and *(b)* over-medication; and if he will make a statement; [161938]

(3) what guidance he has provided to staff at extra care sheltered housing schemes with regard to management and administration of the medicines of frail elderly people. [161940]

Dr. Ladyman: I am not aware of any representations suggesting there is a particular problem with the use of medications in sheltered housing.

The National Minimum Standards for Care Homes for Older People set out the requirements care homes are expected to meet and include a standard on medication.

The regulatory body, the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC), takes the standard into account when carrying out inspections of care homes.

National Minimum Standards for Domiciliary Care Agencies set out the requirements that agency staff are expected to meet and these also include a standard on medication. The standards apply to agencies providing personal care to people in their own homes, including extra care housing and sheltered housing schemes. The NCSC takes the standard into account when they register and inspect domiciliary care agencies.

The NCSC and, from 1 April 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection, has the powers to take whatever enforcement action it considers necessary in the event of poor management or administration of medicines including overmedication.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many adverse drug reactions and adverse incidents relating to the medication of older people living in sheltered housing there were in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [161939]

Dr. Ladyman: Reports of suspected adverse drug reactions (ADRs) to medicines are collated by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) through the spontaneous reporting scheme, the Yellow Card scheme.

The table shows details of the number of reports of suspected adverse drug reactions received through the Yellow Card scheme in 2003 for individuals aged 60 years and above. The figures provided relate to the number of reports received. Some reports may contain more than one reaction.

Reports received between 1 January 2003 and 31 December 2003

Age range (years)	*Number of reports received*
60–69	2,389
70–79	2,231
80–89	1,234
90+	196

We cannot specify whether any of these reports relate to individuals in sheltered housing, as residential details of patients are not collected by this scheme.

It is important to note that data from the Yellow Card scheme, as for all spontaneous reporting schemes, is limited by under-reporting. This does not impair its usefulness for detection of signals of emerging drug safety issues but means that numbers of reports are not complete. A report of an adverse reaction does not necessarily mean that it was caused by the medicine. Additionally, a range of factors may affect how an individual responds to a medicine, for example, their medical history and underlying disease conditions and other concomitant medication.

Use of medicines in the elderly is higher than in other age groups and elderly patients are more likely to be using combinations of medicines.

Organ Donors

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to encourage voluntary organ donation; and how much the Government has spent promoting on *(a)* organ donor cards and *(b)* the organ donor register in each year since 1997. [156621]

Ms Rosie Winterton: People are encouraged to join the organ donor register through a number of initiatives, including when they apply for a driving licence, register with a new general practitioner or, apply for a new passport. Additionally, UK Transplant runs publicity campaigns and targets action to raise the profile of organ donation, including specific advertising and information campaigns to increase organ donation from the South Asian and black African and Caribbean populations.

UK Transplant is currently running a pilot scheme with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to send out organ donor registration forms to all vehicle owners with the road tax reminder during January, March and April this year. The pilot will cover nine million vehicles and UK Transplant will assess the effectiveness of the pilot later in the year. There are currently over 11 million people on the register—19 per cent. of the United Kingdom population.

The amount spent for organ donation publicity and advertising for each year since 1997 is shown in the table.

£ thousand

	Advertising	*Publicity*
1997–98	20	420
1998–99	770	760
1999–2000	470	460
2000–01	430	450
2001–02	180	720
2002–03	210	690

UK Transplant took over responsibility for the organ donation campaign work from the Department of Health in April 2003. UK Transplant's overall budget is over £9 million, of which £900,000 is for publicity.

Prescription Charges

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which medical conditions have become exempt from prescription charges in the last 30 years, broken down by year. [162499]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No medical conditions have become exempt from prescription charges in the last 30 years.

Incontinence

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what funding his Department has allocated for future years for research into incontinence resulting from childbirth; [161238]

(2) what research has been undertaken in the UK by the public sector on incontinence directly resulting from childbirth; what research on the subject conducted by private sector organisations he has received; and if he will make a statement. [161239]

Dr. Ladyman: Details of research projects relating to both incontinence and childbirth funded by, or of interest to, the National Health Service are available on the National Research Register (NRR) at www.update-software.com/national. The NRR currently contains details of four on-going and around 30 completed projects in this area. Many of these projects are funded through allocations made annually to NHS providers for research to meet the priorities and needs of the NHS and to meet the costs to the NHS of hosting research supported by external funders. The total amount allocated to NHS providers in 2003–04 for research and development was £442 million.

The Department has not received any research conducted by private sector organisations on incontinence directly resulting from childbirth.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Education Statistics

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many 14 to 16 year olds in England did not receive full-time education in each of the last five years. [160362]

Mr. Miliband: The requested information is not held centrally.

The Department is, however, supporting local authorities (LAs) to develop robust systems to identify and track children missing education or at risk of doing so. All LAs have a named contact for issues relating to children missing from education and the Department is encouraging networking between different authorities. It is also sharing good practice on working with children missing from education by circulating new guidance to LAs and holding a series of regional seminars in Spring 2004.

Looked-after Children

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many looked-after children had *(a)* a yearly dental health check and *(b)* up-to-date child immunisations, broken down by local authority in each year since 1994; and what the figures were for all children. [158069]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the number of looked-after children that had yearly dental health checks and up-to-date immunisations was not collected centrally between 1994 and 1999. Since 2000 these figures for looked after children have been collected at local authority level and reported to government. Details are provided in the following table. Equivalent figures are not collected centrally for the child population as a whole.

Looked after children who had their teeth checked by a dentist and whose immunisations were up to date: 2000, 2001 and 2002, England

	Children who had their teeth checked by a dentist					
	2000		*2001*		*2002*	
Local authority	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
England[1]	26,800	63	29,200	67	31,800	72
Barking and Dagenham	65	41	70	33	220	85
Barnet	45	27	80	41	180	74
Barnsley	205	81	200	82	170	83
Bath and North East Somerset	95	88	100	92	100	84
Bedfordshire	235	88	235	85	275	88
Bexley	90	67	120	90	150	94
Birmingham	105	8	265	20	1,100	74
Blackburn with Darwen	[2]—	[2]—	90	44	170	76
Blackpool	[2]—	[2]—	165	71	160	82
Bolton	165	77	160	79	160	82
Bournemouth	75	56	135	88	115	76
Bracknell Forest	25	52	30	72	35	77
Bradford	400	75	435	83	460	80
Brent	95	68	180	83	195	75
Brighton and Hove	225	81	240	90	230	84
Bristol	245	56	310	77	285	78
Bromley	125	64	130	54	150	66
Buckinghamshire	[2]—	[2]—	145	69	155	81
Bury	35	25	70	44	135	67
Calderdale	95	62	85	61	60	45
Cambridgeshire	265	87	240	89	215	85
Camden	165	73	160	68	145	62
Cheshire	330	92	310	92	330	92
City of London	—	100	—	—	—	—
Cornwall	265	65	205	50	295	75
Coventry	185	48	260	64	255	69
Croydon	245	94	265	79	390	88
Cumbria	135	54	245	58	300	69
Darlington	15	19	55	63	50	54
Derby	280	83	275	85	245	82
Derbyshire	375	85	395	87	365	86
Devon	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	415	79
Doncaster	170	58	205	65	225	69
Dorset	[2]—	[2]—	150	88	155	88
Dudley	215	77	210	73	200	68
Durham	320	83	220	65	240	72
Ealing	135	41	50	17	220	72
East Riding of Yorkshire	80	49	65	43	105	69
East Sussex	325	95	285	87	310	88
Enfield	145	77	165	86	130	63
Essex	565	66	585	66	665	77
Gateshead	145	80	170	86	135	72

Looked after children who had their teeth checked by a dentist and whose immunisations were up to date: 2000, 2001 and 2002, England

	Children who had their teeth checked by a dentist					
	2000		2001		2002	
Local authority	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Gloucestershire	240	72	370	89	240	59
Greenwich	225	75	285	84	340	94
Hackney	[2]—	[2]—	335	85	310	83
Halton	100	82	100	90	125	93
Hammersmith and Fulham	95	32	200	64	225	73
Hampshire	[2]—	[2]—	135	19	265	37
Haringey	140	54	185	67	185	65
Harrow	80	74	80	87	110	91
Hartlepool	15	18	55	69	70	88
Havering	85	88	95	86	110	92
Herefordshire	125	80	155	98	145	94
Hertfordshire	280	45	435	68	465	68
Hillingdon	185	88	230	90	220	78
Hounslow	95	48	110	48	205	80
Isle of Wight	110	86	105	88	105	85
Isles of Scilly	—	—	0	0	—	—
Islington	160	41	130	33	95	27
Kensington and Chelsea	125	79	125	76	125	70
Kent	[2]—	[2]—	895	77	870	79
Kingston upon Hull	385	75	370	84	320	73
Kingston upon Thames	55	90	60	100	50	89
Kirklees	205	88	165	76	175	89
Knowsley	130	67	130	66	125	70
Lambeth	[2]—	[2]—	300	51	255	46
Lancashire	665	62	740	75	675	69
Leeds	750	75	560	55	710	66
Leicester	200	63	240	63	265	75
Leicestershire	115	65	115	59	130	66
Lewisham	145	40	110	28	255	57
Lincolnshire	295	83	285	74	295	79
Liverpool	340	35	530	55	560	60
Luton	195	92	225	87	245	87
Manchester	675	68	710	74	720	77
Medway Towns	245	95	225	87	165	94
Merton	25	18	35	24	70	53
Middlesbrough	100	76	150	87	175	96
Milton Keynes	165	73	120	67	130	80
Newcastle upon Tyne	105	33	235	82	250	76
Newham	[2]—	[2]—	160	47	205	51
Norfolk	400	91	455	93	460	91
North East Lincolnshire	25	12	25	12	55	29
North Lincolnshire	115	79	145	95	115	81
North Somerset	75	70	85	79	100	91
North Tyneside	155	70	155	70	105	45
North Yorkshire	175	78	255	92	220	92
Northamptonshire	320	75	375	83	345	78
Northumberland	40	20	130	65	140	71
Nottingham	385	89	395	92	310	84
Nottinghamshire	305	86	295	80	325	93
Oldham	140	65	[2]—	[2]—	150	56
Oxfordshire	290	85	270	82	285	83
Peterborough	205	70	250	84	210	79
Plymouth	115	40	225	63	280	81
Poole	75	72	60	60	90	76
Portsmouth	30	17	145	84	145	80
Reading	75	79	70	75	85	83
Redbridge	85	89	80	90	80	80
Redcar and Cleveland	70	65	60	49	85	83
Richmond upon Thames	25	44	70	92	85	96
Rochdale	145	79	160	78	160	76
Rotherham	190	73	165	58	200	63
Rutland	—	60	—	71	—	—
Salford	205	47	210	44	230	49
Sandwell	145	46	265	76	190	51
Sefton	155	78	190	76	135	54
Sheffield	125	26	135	27	85	17
Shropshire	70	54	90	74	75	58
Slough	55	56	60	55	80	68
Solihull	[2]—	[2]—	100	91	105	83
Somerset	70	34	165	88	180	88

Looked after children who had their teeth checked by a dentist and whose immunisations were up to date: 2000, 2001 and 2002, England

	Children who had their teeth checked by a dentist					
	2000		*2001*		*2002*	
Local authority	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
South Gloucestershire	85	86	80	82	80	89
South Tyneside	160	73	165	81	155	76
Southampton	120	41	100	34	185	64
Southend	115	61	135	80	170	89
Southwark	245	49	295	54	360	71
St. Helens	120	58	135	63	140	70
Staffordshire	[2]—	[2]—	165	45	170	45
Stockport	165	59	210	74	310	99
Stockton on Tees	140	92	130	91	105	86
Stoke-on-Trent	210	76	240	85	230	83
Suffolk	310	75	395	80	310	60
Sunderland	325	88	300	78	335	90
Surrey	290	55	290	55	290	54
Sutton	70	66	105	84	105	92
Swindon	45	35	45	38	65	50
Tameside	175	68	175	90	135	72
Telford and Wrekin	80	75	100	93	110	85
Thurrock	80	69	100	75	125	78
Torbay	135	74	125	76	130	91
Tower Hamlets	160	83	15	7	15	5
Trafford	75	84	90	80	75	59
Wakefield	290	85	255	74	185	54
Walsall	230	85	265	91	285	87
Waltham Forest	105	62	85	50	160	69
Wandsworth	225	88	110	46	215	87
Warrington	90	68	60	53	75	57
Warwickshire	185	82	190	82	185	74
West Berkshire	95	97	85	91	85	95
West Sussex	105	23	540	95	510	93
Westminster	155	76	110	56	145	72
Wigan	320	88	315	87	270	84
Wiltshire	145	87	155	89	170	87
Windsor and Maidenhead	50	96	50	94	40	100
Wirral	205	74	235	73	270	75
Wokingham	45	65	35	61	30	57
Wolverhampton	200	64	190	69	215	76
Worcestershire	260	55	275	60	330	78
York	60	69	50	51	75	79

	Children whose immunisations were up to date					
	2000		*2001*		*2002*	
Local authority	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
England[1]	29,000	69	30,800	71	32,400	73
Barking and Dagenham	50	34	165	80	80	32
Barnet	75	44	100	51	150	63
Barnsley	215	84	235	96	200	98
Bath and North East Somerset	95	89	90	81	65	58
Bedfordshire	245	93	240	87	260	84
Bexley	90	68	125	92	155	97
Birmingham	930	68	1,015	77	970	65
Blackburn with Darwen	[2]—	[2]—	180	90	175	80
Blackpool	[2]—	[2]—	210	91	180	92
Bolton	165	77	130	65	140	72
Bournemouth	105	78	145	95	130	86
Bracknell Forest	15	39	25	62	30	65
Bradford	385	73	400	77	465	81
Brent	55	42	145	65	185	71
Brighton and Hove	230	83	210	78	230	83
Bristol	320	73	345	86	335	91
Bromley	135	70	65	26	130	57
Buckinghamshire	120	49	160	76	180	94
Bury	25	18	115	72	150	75
Calderdale	115	75	110	78	75	58
Cambridgeshire	270	90	225	83	220	86
Camden	190	84	115	49	125	54
Cheshire	345	97	325	96	345	96
City of London	—	100	—	—	—	—

	Children whose immunisations were up to date					
	2000		2001		2002	
Local authority	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Cornwall	285	70	225	55	280	72
Coventry	350	90	280	68	310	84
Croydon	245	94	245	73	360	81
Cumbria	[2]—	[2]—	235	57	220	51
Darlington	55	61	50	56	75	80
Derby	310	93	320	98	255	86
Derbyshire	425	96	415	92	405	96
Devon	[2]—	[2]—	355	69	385	74
Doncaster	190	65	230	71	220	68
Dorset	145	81	160	93	165	93
Dudley	250	89	270	94	250	86
Durham	50	13	220	65	240	72
Ealing	110	34	35	11	175	57
East Riding of Yorkshire	105	65	115	75	110	70
East Sussex	315	91	295	90	330	94
Enfield	110	59	85	43	95	47
Essex	675	78	775	88	790	91
Gateshead	105	58	145	71	175	91
Gloucestershire	185	55	380	91	325	80
Greenwich	260	86	315	92	355	97
Hackney	[2]—	[2]—	80	21	160	43
Halton	105	87	85	79	120	90
Hammersmith and Fulham	85	29	185	60	190	62
Hampshire	[2]—	[2]—	105	14	245	34
Haringey	160	62	185	66	220	78
Harrow	85	78	80	89	110	93
Hartlepool	40	51	60	77	70	91
Havering	95	97	105	96	115	96
Herefordshire	150	94	140	86	105	69
Hertfordshire	345	56	565	89	530	77
Hillingdon	180	86	235	91	260	92
Hounslow	105	55	165	73	210	82
Isle of Wight	120	94	115	98	120	97
Isles of Scilly	—	—	0	0	—	—
Islington	250	65	110	28	105	30
Kensington and Chelsea	135	86	135	82	155	88
Kent	[2]—	[2]—	745	64	920	83
Kingston upon Hull	395	78	310	70	290	66
Kingston upon Thames	55	90	55	89	50	84
Kirklees	220	96	195	90	150	76
Knowsley	105	54	115	58	140	78
Lambeth	[2]—	[2]—	310	53	270	49
Lancashire	920	86	845	86	575	58
Leeds	520	52	505	49	585	54
Leicester	275	86	315	84	280	78
Leicestershire	150	84	180	92	175	91
Lewisham	115	32	240	62	340	77
Lincolnshire	325	91	315	82	320	85
Liverpool	575	59	540	56	675	72
Luton	185	88	220	85	235	85
Manchester	80	8	335	35	445	47
Medway Towns	250	96	255	98	170	95
Merton	30	20	30	23	95	70
Middlesbrough	115	89	160	95	175	95
Milton Keynes	200	88	155	87	150	93
Newcastle Upon Tyne	70	21	225	78	270	82
Newham	[2]—	[2]—	180	52	105	26
Norfolk	420	94	475	97	485	95
North East Lincolnshire	150	74	90	47	135	71
North Lincolnshire	130	92	150	100	135	95
North Somerset	60	58	90	82	80	73
North Tyneside	200	92	200	91	235	100
North Yorkshire	175	79	255	92	220	93
Northamptonshire	205	48	415	91	395	89
Northumberland	25	12	170	84	180	90
Nottingham	400	93	420	98	340	92
Nottinghamshire	340	96	320	87	335	95
Oldham	175	82	160	69	175	66
Oxfordshire	315	93	235	71	300	88
Peterborough	55	19	220	75	210	78
Plymouth	205	72	260	72	285	83

	Children whose immunisations were up to date					
	2000		2001		2002	
Local authority	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Poole	60	56	65	63	90	75
Portsmouth	105	59	125	74	65	37
Reading	80	85	85	89	95	93
Redbridge	85	88	90	97	85	81
Redcar and Cleveland	85	78	40	35	65	62
Richmond upon Thames	40	68	70	95	85	94
Rochdale	180	97	170	84	205	98
Rotherham	160	61	225	77	220	68
Rutland	—	60	—	57	—	—
Salford	170	39	240	51	280	60
Sandwell	255	82	300	87	200	55
Sefton	120	62	160	65	215	85
Sheffield	320	65	255	50	250	49
Shropshire	85	65	80	65	85	65
Slough	80	78	80	74	75	66
Solihull	90	79	75	65	80	65
Somerset	85	39	140	76	185	92
South Gloucestershire	80	79	85	86	75	82
South Tyneside	125	56	145	71	150	74
Southampton	180	63	180	62	225	78
Southend	65	34	150	91	160	83
Southwark	135	27	285	52	405	80
St. Helens	100	48	105	50	145	73
Staffordshire	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	220	58
Stockport	155	56	85	30	210	67
Stockton on Tees	150	99	130	94	85	70
Stoke-on-Trent	235	85	265	93	250	89
Suffolk	360	88	475	97	210	41
Sunderland	300	81	295	77	325	87
Surrey	390	74	320	61	235	44
Sutton	85	78	100	80	75	64
Swindon	65	55	55	47	75	56
Tameside	165	65	180	92	165	87
Telford and Wrekin	55	54	70	64	80	61
Thurrock	65	59	105	80	125	78
Torbay	125	69	125	76	115	83
Tower Hamlets	150	79	20	10	270	100
Trafford	80	91	80	71	95	78
Wakefield	295	86	175	52	170	50
Walsall	260	96	265	92	280	87
Waltham Forest	70	40	80	45	80	35
Wandsworth	155	61	190	78	175	71
Warrington	70	52	75	65	85	67
Warwickshire	190	85	215	92	230	92
West Berkshire	95	98	90	98	85	97
West Sussex	395	83	515	91	525	95
Westminster	135	66	175	89	180	89
Wigan	340	94	315	87	260	80
Wiltshire	155	92	160	93	180	93
Windsor and Maidenhead	45	94	50	92	40	100
Wirral	210	76	235	74	265	75
Wokingham	45	68	15	24	25	45
Wolverhampton	285	91	250	91	265	94
Worcestershire	215	46	300	66	345	81
York	85	99	75	74	70	73

[1] All figures presented at England level include estimates for missing data.
[2] Information not available.
Notes:
1. "—" depicts a small number that has been suppressed to preserve confidentiality
2. All numbers have been rounded to the nearest five.
Source:
OC2 return.

"Every Child Matters"

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost was of drafting, publishing and circulating "Every Child Matters: Next Steps"; and to how many people the document was sent. [162265]

Margaret Hodge: "Every Child Matters: The Next Steps" was published for three purposes:

To reflect what the Government was told in consultation on the Children's Green Paper, "Every Child Matters". Some 4,500 responses were received, two-thirds of them from children and young people;

To put into context the Children Bill, published on the same day as the document;

To provide information to external partners, assisting them in taking forward the changes set out in the Green Paper and developed through discussions with a wide range of external partners.

The figures in the following table are estimates of the costs involved in drafting, publishing and distributing 'Every Child Matters: The Next Steps'.

£000

Item	Cost
Drafting	17
Publishing	24
Initial distribution	3

The cost so far is therefore approximately £44,000.

Around 4,000 copies were distributed initially, leaving around 11,000 copies available for ordering by interested parties. We anticipate that many others will download the documents from the DfES website.

Child Care

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much the Government has spent on pre-school education and child care per head of children below compulsory school age in each year since 1998. [161018]

Mr. Miliband: My Department does not collect this information.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps his Department is taking to tackle the regional disparities in the availability of child care places for children under compulsory school age. [161019]

Margaret Hodge: The Government are providing substantial new resources to increase the availability of high quality child care for all age groups of children. Funding for 2004–06 has been specifically targeted towards those local authorities with lower levels of child care in order to reduce regional disparities.

By December 2003, more than 920,000 new child care places had been created since 1997, benefiting over 1.6 million children. We are on track to create places for over 2 million children by 2006. All four-year-olds have been guaranteed a free early education place since 1998. With effect from 1 April 2004, every three-year-old will be able to access a free place, six months earlier than originally planned.

Children (Classifications)

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills within which age ranges a young child is classified as *(a)* a baby and *(b)* an infant for official purposes. [162802]

Ruth Kelly: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Charles Hendry, dated 22 March 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking within which age ranges a young child is classified as *(a)* a baby and *(b)* an infant for official purposes. (162802)

In National Statistics there is no single official definition of the word 'baby' or the word 'infant' in relation to age. Both may have different meanings depending on the context in which they are used.

Children's Services Authority (Lancashire)

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the possible problems of co-ordination that might arise from the establishment of a local safeguarding board to cover a Lancashire children's services authority under Clause 9 of the Children Bill. [161979]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* The responses to the consultation on the Green Paper, "Every Child Matters", strongly supported the vision it set out and included a great deal of helpful feedback on the practical issues county councils and other partners will need to address in implementing the proposed changes. "Every Child Matters: Next Steps", published on 4 March, sets out the Government's proposals for both legislative change and a programme for change and support for local leadership in delivering those reforms, ahead of the 2004 Spending Review.

We have also begun informal discussions with local authority associations including the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Social Services. We will consult formally on regulations and guidance on Local Safeguarding Children Boards in due course.

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the possible practical problems that might arise from the designation of Lancashire county council as a children's services authority under Clause 6 of the Children Bill. [161980]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* The responses to the consultation Green Paper, "Every Child Matters" included a great deal of helpful advice on the practical challenges that large and complex county councils such as Lancashire face in implementing the proposed changes. We do not underestimate those challenges and will work in close partnership with councils, local authorities and other partners to address them. Our plans to support authorities include appointing regional change advisers, producing statutory guidance, and developing and sharing good practice and examples of delivery models.

Class Sizes

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Buckingham were taught in classes of more than 30 on the latest date for which figures are available. [161309]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The data requested are shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools: classes of more than 30[1] Buckingham Parliamentary Constituency—January 2003

Total number of classes	*Total number of pupils*	*Number of classes with more than 30 pupils*	*Number of pupils in classes of more than 30*
Primary schools			
Key Stage 1			
113	2,610	1	33
Key Stage 2			
161	4,208	26	838
Secondary schools			
All secondary classes			
180	3,976	7	229

[1] One teacher classes.

Source:

Annual Schools' Census

Connexions

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the progress central Government has made in supporting Connexions Partnerships by *(a)* linking its policies together at national level, *(b)* sending consistent messages to all Connexions partner agencies and *(c)* reducing bureaucracy, as set out in Youth Support Services for 13 to 19-year-olds: A Vision for 2006. [161033]

Margaret Hodge: From the outset of Connexions, Government departments have worked together in partnership with external groups such as the police, social services, health services, schools and local communities to implement coherent policies for young people. Through joint working, central Government have developed guidance and targets to support consistent approaches by Connexions Partnerships and other agencies in tackling a wide range of challenging objectives, including reducing the number of young people not in education training or employment; halving the number of teenage conceptions and raising the participation of teenage mothers in learning; improving outcomes for disabled children and looked after children; supporting runaways; tackling drugs misuse; preventing offending by young people and building community cohesion.

Bureaucracy has been reduced through a range of approaches initiated by central Government including, a Supporting Better Delivery Action Plan in which central Government has reduced administrative burdens on Connexions Partnerships; 'reality testing' with 'twinned' Government Offices and Connexions Partnerships; controlling the volume of paperwork distributed from the centre; structured communication channels; and the setting up of a bureaucracy log on the Connexions website.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance his Department has issued to Connexions partnership Chief Executives concerning partnerships' VAT liability. [161075]

Margaret Hodge: Connexions Partnerships were advised in November 2002 that HM Customs and Excise had ruled that the Connexions grant would fall outside the scope of VAT from 1 April 2004. This means they will be unable to recover any VAT they incur on Connexions business from that date. We are asking Partnerships to look at improving their tax efficiency by moving to different structures where they feel this is appropriate.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what initiatives have developed from the Achieving Together conference for Connexions partnerships and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and other youth service providers to ensure that Connexions works better with the VCS. [161091]

Margaret Hodge: The "Achieving Together for Young People" conference, which was held in Solihull in June 2003, was the first national event bringing together representatives from Connexions Partnerships, Connexions teams in Government Offices for the Regions, voluntary and community organisations and Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF) Projects, The event was designed and delivered in partnership with the VCS. It used NSF as a case study of how voluntary and community organisations could deliver services to young people. The conference was attended by 300 delegates.

Feedback from the event suggests that the conference was largely successful in meeting its aims, in particular, in helping to facilitate the further development of partnership working between Connexions Partnerships and the Voluntary and Community Sector in providing better services for young people and in sharing good practice on joint working. The conference was also a showcase for Connexions to demonstrate its commitment to involving young people who were actively involved in running workshops and in producing the conference report.

The conference confirmed earlier evidence that some Connexions partnerships were further ahead in terms of involving the VCS in their work than others, and that newer partnerships in particular could benefit from the help of others. This led to the establishment of a small informal advisory group of six VCS Co-ordinators from partnerships who were leading the field in terms of their involvement with the Sector. Members of the advisory group are contacted by other Partnerships for advice on building their engagement. In addition, a smaller follow-up national event was held in February 2004 for Connexions VCS Co-ordinators that enabled the exchange of ideas and good practice.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the value of contracts awarded by the Department to *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* KPMG, *(c)* Ernst and Young, *(d)* Deloitte and Touche, *(e)* McKinsey, *(f)* Bain and Co., *(g)* CfBT, *(h)* Westminster Education Consultants and *(i)* VT Education was in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002 and (iii) 2003. [160054]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* My Department does not hold a central record of individual contracts. However, our financial records show the

following total payments made by the Department to *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* KPMG, *(c)* Ernst and Young, *(d)* Deloitte and Touche, *(e)* McKinsey, *(f)* Bain and Co., *(g)* CfBT, *(h)* Westminster Education Consultants and *(i)* VT Education in financial years 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 to date.

£

Organisation	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04 to date*
PricewaterhouseCoopers	5,349,686	3,847,542	3,503,286
KPMG	396,353	1,014,559	1,312,198
Ernst and Young	0	38,449	0
Deloitte and Touche	275,594	201,670	242,971
McKinsey	0	0	0
Bain and Co.	0	0	0
CfBT[1]	47,072,194	55,759,330	36,406,560
Westminster Education Consultants	1,045,168	1,172,785	691,842
VT Education	0	0	0

[1] The payments to CfBT are principally represented by the National Strategies. This contract represents around 80 per cent. of the total CfBT costs shown.

Deprivation

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the Index for Multiple Deprivation is for each local education authority. [162678]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria are used to determine the level of deprivation used in calculating per pupil funding. [162679]

Mr. Miliband: The Education Formula Spending Share formula is used to allocate education funding for each local education authority. This formula comprises a basic entitlement for each pupil plus top-ups for deprivation and where it costs more to recruit and retain teachers, using data from the New Earnings Survey. The deprivation measures used are i) children in families in receipt of Income Support; ii) children in families in receipt of Working Families Tax Credit; iii) proportion of primary children with English as an additional language and iv) proportion of secondary children in low-achieving ethnic groups.

Drugs Advisers

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement about *(a)* the future of drugs advisers and *(b)* their funding in Essex schools. [162195]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Funding for school drug advisers (£7.5 million per year) has been made available through the Standards Fund since 2001. From April 2004 it will be up to local education authorities and schools to support drug education, including school drug adviser posts, out of the total resources available to them. The Department does not hold information centrally on the number of school drug advisers within each local education authority.

Young people will continue to receive advice and support on drug issues from schools, the Connexions Service and a range of local agencies.

Future Schools Initiative

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what supplementary information he is requesting from those unsuccessful in bidding for resources from the Building Schools for the Future initiative but who were runners up; and if he will make a statement. [162595]

Mr. Miliband: We have the necessary information we need from authorities to prioritise the second or third waves of Building Schools for the Future (BSF), and do not at this stage anticipate requesting anything further.

Teaching Assistants

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teaching assistants were employed in *(a)* north east Lincolnshire and *(b)* north Lincolnshire local education authority in each year since 1997. [162583]

Mr. Miliband: The following table gives the numbers of full time equivalent teaching assistants employed in north east Lincolnshire and north Lincolnshire local education authorities for each year between 1997 and 2003, the latest year for which data is available.

	North East Lincolnshire	*North Lincolnshire*
1997	216.6	175.7
1998	242.4	204.7
1999	261.9	244.6
2000	312.0	267.0
2001	462.3	329.3
2002	523.6	429.8
2003	570.4	451.0

Source:
Annual Schools Census

Education (Ribble Valley)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils were being educated at each key stage in the Ribble Valley constituency in each school year since 1997–98. [161810]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is shown in the table.

All schools[1] number of pupils by key stage: position as at January each year Ribble Valley parliamentary constituency

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Key Stage 1[2]	2,379	2,518	2,489	2,463	2,353	2,354	2,455
Key Stage 2[3]	4,443	4,977	5,198	5,183	5,171	5,105	5,157
Key Stage 3[4]	4,483	4,754	4,858	4,953	5,096	5,174	5,235
Key Stage 4[5]	2,709	2,969	3,034	3,120	3,162	3,169	3,320

[1] Includes maintained schools and independent schools.
[2] Pupils aged 5 and 6 as at 31 August the previous year.
[3] Pupils aged 7, 8, 9 and 10 as at 31 August the previous year.
[4] Pupils aged 11,12 and 13 as at 31 August the previous year.
[5] Pupils aged 14 and 15 as at 31 August the previous year.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils were on the roll in each secondary school in the Ribble Valley and Fulwood constituency in each year since 1998; and what percentage *(a)* were eligible for and *(b)* took up free school meals. [161811]

Mr. Miliband: It is the Department's policy not to publish figures about individual schools unless the schools concerned have had the opportunity to check or confirm that information. Therefore, aggregate data for Ribble Valley parliamentary constituency is shown in the table.

Maintained secondary schools[1]: number of pupils and school meal arrangements
Position as at January each year—Ribble Valley parliamentary constituency

	Total number of pupils on roll	*Number of pupils taking free school meals*	*Percentage of pupils taking free school meals*	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*
1998	7,813	717	9.2	1,011	12.9
1999	7,982	779	9.8	1,001	12.5
2000	8,160	742	9.1	903	11.1
2001	8,348	531	6.4	840	10.1
2002	8,463	678	8.0	821	9.7
2003	8,610	677	7.9	758	8.8

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Maintained primary and secondary schools: number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals by ethnic group and gender[1]
January 2003: England

	Pupils of compulsory school age and above					
	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[2]			*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[3]*		
	Boys	*Girls*	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*
Maintained Primary[4]						
White	226,395	218,367	444,762	15.5	15.6	15.6
White British	214,385	207,118	421,503	15.2	15.3	15.3
Irish	1,549	1,413	2,962	22.7	21.7	22.2
Traveller of Irish heritage	843	841	1,684	64.0	65.0	64.5
Any other White background	8,449	7,814	16,263	23.1	22.5	22.8
Gypsy / Roma	1,169	1,181	2,350	53.6	54.8	54.2
Mixed	14,835	14,558	29,393	28.2	28.3	28.2
White and Black Caribbean	6,500	6,599	13,099	35.3	35.3	35.3
White and Black African	1,430	1,457	2,887	30.0	30.2	30.1
White and Asian	2,152	2,034	4,186	20.4	20.1	20.3
Any other mixed background	4,753	4,468	9,221	25.1	25.0	25.1
Asian	32,317	31,251	63,568	26.9	27.1	27.0
Indian	4,482	4,370	8.852	11.7	12.0	11.8
Pakistani	16,402	15,726	32,128	32.5	32.6	32.5
Bangladeshi	9,013	8,851	17,864	44.6	44.7	44.6
Any other Asian background	2,420	2,304	4,724	21.3	21.6	21.5
Black	24,803	24,187	48,990	38.5	38.2	38.4
Black Caribbean	8,022	7,909	15,931	31.1	31.2	31.2
Black African	14,128	13,737	27,865	44.6	44.1	44.4
Any other Black background	2,653	2,541	5.194	37.7	37.6	37.6
Chinese	580	570	1,150	10.8	10.5	10.6
Any other ethnic group	6,316	5,648	11,964	41.5	40.0	40.7
Classified	305,246	294,581	599,827	17.8	17.9	17.8
Unclassified[5]	11,280	10,345	21,625	19.3	19.5	19.4
All Pupils[1]	316,526	304,926	621,452	17.8	18.0	17.9

	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[2]			*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[3]*		
	Boys	*Girls*	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*
Maintained Secondary[4]						
White	168,522	168,791	337,313	12.2	12.4	12.3
White British	160,221	160,961	321,182	12.0	12.2	12.1
Irish	1,173	1,275	2,448	18.3	18.8	18.5
Traveller of Irish heritage	260	260	520	42.0	48.2	44.9
Any other White background	6,508	5,908	12,416	20.1	18.9	19.5
Gypsy / Roma	360	387	747	49.8	46.7	48.1
Mixed	7,628	8,360	15,988	24.5	24.9	24.7
White and Black Caribbean	3,398	3,765	7,163	30.4	30.5	30.5
White and Black African	658	740	1,398	25.2	26.7	26.0
White and Asian	1,001	1,107	2,108	16.1	17.2	16.7
Any other mixed background	2,571	2,748	5,319	23.0	22.8	22.9
Asian	30,235	29,994	60,229	29.2	29.7	29.4
Indian	4,788	4,686	9,474	12.0	12.0	12.0
Pakistani	15,049	14,142	29,191	38.3	38.2	38.3
Bangladeshi	8,260	9,211	17,471	56.7	58.8	57.8
Any other Asian background	2,138	1,955	4,093	21.8	21.0	21.4

	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[2]			*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*[3]		
	Boys	*Girls*	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*
Black	17,284	17,687	34,971	33.7	33.0	33.3
Black Caribbean	6,371	6,502	12,873	28.5	27.4	27.9
Black African	8,715	9,089	17,804	39.4	38.9	39.2
Any other Black background	2,198	2,096	4,294	32.0	31.9	31.9
Chinese	627	623	1,250	10.3	10.5	10.4
Any other ethnic group	4,711	4,191	8,902	35.9	35.6	35.8
Classified	229,007	229,646	458,653	14.5	14.7	14.6
Unclassified[5]	10,538	9,589	20,127	12.4	12.6	12.5
All Pupils[1]	239,545	239,235	478,780	14.4	14.6	14.5

[1] Pupils of compulsory school age and above.
[2] Excludes dually registered pupils and includes boarders. Free school meal statistics shown here may not match with those shown in tables 13,14 and 15 due to difference in coverage.
[3] Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of pupils in each ethnic group.
[4] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[5] Information was not sought or refused.

Education Funding (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding was spent per pupil in Crosby in each of the last seven years. [160398]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is submitted to the Department according to local education authority areas, rather than districts within an area. Crosby is a district of Sefton Local Education Authority. The information for Sefton LEA is as follows:

Net Current Expenditure per pupil

	Pre-Primary Education	*Primary Education*	*Pre-Primary and Primary Education*	*Secondary Education*	*Special Schools*
1995–96	[1]—	[1]—	1,864	2,591	18,029
1996–97	[1]—	[1]—	1,881	2,641	19,524
1997–98	[1]—	[1]—	1,887	2,635	20,191
1998–99	[1]—	[1]—	2,014	2,694	19,953
1999–2000	4,695	2,168	2,184	2,779	23,923
2000–01	16,779	2,325	2,414	3,007	26,116
2001–02	30,555	2,565	2,740	3,434	27,405

[1] n/a

Notes:
1. The financial data are taken from Sefton LEA's Section 52 Outturn Statement submitted to the DfES from 1999–2000 onwards and the ODPM's RO1 statement prior to then.
2. Pupil data are drawn from the Annual Schools Census adjusted to be on a financial year basis.
3. Net current expenditure (NCE) included expenditure within schools and also that incurred centrally by the LEAs.
4. Expenditure was not distinguished between pre-primary and primary sectors until the inception of the Section 52 outturn statement in 1999–2000.
5. The NCE per pupil figures for pre-primary and primary relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in the pre-primary sector and maintained primary schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained nursery and primary schools sector.
6. The NCE per pupil figures for secondary relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in maintained secondary schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained secondary schools sector.
7. The NCE per pupil figures for special schools relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in maintained special schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained special schools sector.
8. Figures used are quoted in cash terms and are as reported by the LEA.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on education in Crosby in each of the last seven years. [160440]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is submitted to the Department according to local education authority areas, rather than districts within an area. Crosby is a district of Sefton Local Education Authority. The information for Sefton LEA is as follows:

Net current expenditure on education in Sefton

£

	Pre-Primary Education	*Primary Education*	*Pre-Primary and Primary Education*	*Secondary Education*	*Special Schools*	*School spend*	*Total spend*
1995–96	n/a	n/a	50,315,000	50,485,000	7,545,000	108,345,000	127,284,000
1996–97	n/a	n/a	50,851,000	51,729,000	8,249,000	110,829,000	129,224,000
1997–98	n/a	n/a	50,778,000	51,924,000	8,652,000	111,354,000	129,018,000
1998–99	n/a	n/a	53,711,000	53,752,000	8,786,000	116,249,000	134,038,000
1999–2000	746,462	56,623,696	57,370,158	56,179,871	10,574,015	124,124,044	134,055,749
2000–01	2,653,825	59,676,537	62,330,362	61,801,812	11,312,423	135,444,597	142,747,524
2001–02	4,827,740	64,331,639	69,159,379	71,239,782	11,606,211	152,005,372	156,814,246

Notes:
1. The financial data are taken from Sefton LEA's section 52 Outturn Statements submitted to the DfES from 1999–2000 onwards and the ODPM's R01 statement prior to then.
2. Net current expenditure (NCE) includes expenditure within schools and also that incurred centrally by the LEAs.

3. Expenditure was not distinguished between pre-primary and primary sectors until the inception of the section 52 outturn statement in 1999–2000.
4. School spend includes net current expenditure on pre-primary education, primary education, secondary education and special schools.
5. Total spend includes school spend plus net current expenditure on education out of school, continuing education and management and support.
6. Figures used are cash terms as reported by the LEA.

Education/Training (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money was spent on school buildings in Greater London in each year since 1997, broken down by borough. [163068]

Mr. Miliband: I refer the hon. Member to my reply given on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1356W. The tables provided in that answer set out the capital support made by this Government to each London LEA since 1997–98.

Environmentally Sustainable Procurement

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in what ways environmentally sustainable procurement strategies within the Department have driven innovation in the design and supply of products. [159101]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I refer to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs on 10 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1543W.

Within the framework of this overall approach, my Department is contributing towards innovation through public procurement in a number of ways including:

encouraging schools to adopt innovative procurement structures in relation to provision of school food;

offering fair trade products for sale in all departmental restaurants; and

achieving a 17 per cent. renewable energy supply.

GCSE (Kurdish)

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if he will make a statement on the establishment of GCSE courses in the Kurdish language; [159248]

(2) what support his Department provides for the teaching of the Kurdish language. [159249]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department encourages schools to offer a wide range of languages, including community languages, but does not provide targeted support for Kurdish. Under current National Curriculum requirements, schools are free to offer any modern foreign language, including Kurdish, as long as the offer includes at least one of the working languages of the EU.

The decision whether or not to offer particular subjects at GCSE is one for the awarding bodies. Currently they do not offer a GCSE in Kurdish.

Higher Education

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on higher education in Buckingham in each of the last seven years. [161574]

Alan Johnson: Data on funding for undergraduate students is held at institutional or regional level. There are no publicly funded higher education institutions within Buckingham. Eligible students attending designated courses at the privately funded University of Buckingham are eligible for student support. The available figures for funding these students are shown as follows. They relate only to spending on tuition fees, student loans (cash cost) and Dependants Grant for full-time undergraduate students.

£

Academic year	*Tuition fees*	*Student Loans (cash cost)*	*Dependants Grant*
1999–00	76,800	73,700	2,470
2000–01	157,800	115,700	3,180
2001–02	179,600	141,300	8,990
2002–03	178,000	140,500	2,400

Kinship Foster Carers

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of kinship foster carers *(a)* as a total for England, *(b)* aged 50 to 64 and *(c)* aged 65 and over; and if he will make a statement. [161934]

Margaret Hodge: The information we have available centrally provides a snapshot of Kinship foster placements at 31 March 2002. At 31 March 2002, 6,900 placements out of a total of 39,200 foster placements in England were with a relative or friend.

The data we hold relates to number of placements rather than number of carers therefore we are unable to breakdown the figure in terms of ages of carers.

2003 data will be available from 31 March 2004.

Learning and Skills Councils

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many complaints about maladministration have been dealt with internally by the Learning and Skills Councils in London since their establishment; and what the outcomes were. [162104]

Alan Johnson: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Mark Haysom, the LSC's Chief Executive, will write to you direct and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

New Deal for Schools

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding each school in Chorley has received from the New Deal for Schools. [161599]

Mr. Miliband: The table below shows the schools in the Chorley constituency that benefited from investment through the New Deal for Schools (NDS)

programme, which commenced in 1997–98. From 2000–01, capital allocations to local authorities and schools have largely been made by formulae linked to Asset Management Plans. In addition, all schools have, since 2000–01, received Devolved Formula capital to use on their most urgent capital needs.

NDS Allocations to schools in the Chorley constituency

(£)

Year	*School*	*Project Details*	*Type*	*Grant awarded*
1997/98	Rivington and Blackrod High School	Lighting		381,000.00
	Albany High School	Refurbishment and suiting of CDT facilities	LEA wide grant	[1]2,006,000.00
	Parklands High School	Refurbishment of technology areas and laboratories	LEA wide grant	[1]2,006,000.00
	St Michael's Church of England High School	Refurbishment of technology areas and laboratories	LEA wide grant	[1]2,006,000.00
1999/2000	Golden Hill Pupil Referral Unit	Rewires	Project including 18 schools	[2]1,007,100.00
	Eccleston Primary School	Boilers/heating	Project including 17 schools	[2]601, 900.00
	Adlington Primary School	Boilers/heating	Project including 17 schools	[2]601,900.00
	Clayton Brook Primary School	Playground repairs	Project including 25 schools	[2]300,000.00
	Adlington St. Paul's Church of England Primary School	Boilers/heating	Project including 17 schools	[2]601 ,900.00
	St George's Church of England Primary School, Chorley	Playground repairs	Project including 25 schools	[2]300,000.00
	Clayton-le-Woods Church of England Primary School	Playground repairs	Project including 25 schools	[2] 300,000.00
	Mawdesley St. Peters Church of England Primary School	Playground repairs	Project including 25 schools	[2] 300,000.00
	St Chad's Catholic Primary School	Rewires	Project including 18 schools	[2] 1, 007, 100.00
	St Michael's Church of England High School	Boilers/Heating	Project including 17 schools	[2] 601, 900.00
	Mayfieid School	Playground repairs	Project including 25 schools	[2] 300,000,00
2000/01	Clayton-le-Woods Manor Road Primary School	Replacement of temporary classrooms		128,204.00
	Rivington and Blackrod High School	Replacement of temporary classrooms	Project including 7 schools	[2] 1, 506,040.00
	Eccleston Primary School	Playground repairs	Project including 29 schools	[2] 270,090.00
	Balshaw Lane Community Primary School	Rewires of electrical systems	Project including 17 schools	[2] 951 ,650.00
	Duke Street Primary School	Replacement of Boilers/Heating Systems	Project including 36 schools	[2] 1, 143,1 10.00
	Adlington St. Paul's Church of England Primary School	Rewires of electrical systems	Project including 17 schools	[2] 951, 650,00
	Chorley All Saints Church of England Primary School and Nursery Unit	Replacement of boilers/heating systems	Project including 36 schools	[2] 1, 143,1 10.00
	Albany High School	Refurbishment of CDT	Project including 6 schools	[2] 1, 502,992.00

Note:
Rivington and Blackrod High School is administered by Bolton local education authority (LEA). The remaining schools are administered by Lancashire LEA.
[1] For NDS 1 the £2,006,000 grant allocated was for Lancashire LEA wide projects, part of which was used for the three projects in the Chorley schools. The LEA will be able to say how much was allocated to each school.
[2] Allocations shown are the totals for packages of projects which included schools in Chorley, The LEA will be able to say how much was allocated to each school.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent guidance the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has issued on the titles of courses. [162677]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority last published guidance on the titles of qualifications in March 2000. The QCA is planning to consult on new guidance on titles in autumn 2004.

Rewarding and Developing Staff Initiative

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding the Government has provided to universities for the Rewarding and Developing Staff funding initiative; and what criteria the Government attached to the initiative. [162063]

Alan Johnson: The Government have invested £50 million in 2001–02, £110 million in 2002–03 and £170 million for 2003–04 to underpin higher education institutions (HEIs) human resource strategies. This helps institutions to recruit and retain the staff they need to improve further the quality of teaching and learning, and to modernise management and reward systems. The £170 million will be consolidated into institutions' core grants from 2004–05. As part of the 2002 Spending Review settlement, an additional £50 million in 2004–05 and £117 million in 2005–06 will also be provided. This additional funding will be consolidated into institutions' core grants where the momentum for change is being maintained.

HEIs have been asked to specifically address six priority areas in their human resource strategies:

targeted approaches to recruitment and retention;

staff and management development;

equal opportunities including implementation of institution-wide job evaluation;

reviewing staffing needs to match market demands, student numbers and technological change;

rewarding good performance through annual staff reviews;

tackling poor performance.

School Catchments

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school pupils live more than three miles from the school that they attend. [162077]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The information requested is shown in the table.

Numbers of pupils living more than three miles from the maintained primary and secondary schools[1] that they attend—January 2003

	Primary	*Secondary*
Number of school population travelling more than three miles	155,187	583,446
Percentage of school population travelling more than three miles	3.7	17.8

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed

Source:
Annual Schools' Census

School Funding (Staffordshire)

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding each school in *(a)* Burton constituency and *(b)* Staffordshire has received from the New Deal for School. [161848]

Mr. Miliband: I will write to my hon. Friend with this information and a copy of my response will be placed in the Library.

School Meals

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school pupils in England are (i) eligible for and (ii) take up free school meals, broken down by ethnic group. [161910]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The latest available information on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals broken down by ethnicity was published on 25 September 2003 in the statistical volume Statistics of Education, Schools in England 2003, Table 50, a copy of which has been placed in the Library. The table is also available on the statistics section of the DfES website at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgatewav/DB/VOL/v000417/index.shtml

The available information on the take up of free school meals is limited to school level aggregates that cannot be broken down by ethnic group.

Maintained primary and secondary schools: Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals by ethnic group and gender[1]—January 2003
Pupils of compulsory school age and above

England

	Maintained Primary[2]					
	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[3]			*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[4]*		
	Boys	*Girls*	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*
White	226,395	218,367	444,762	15.5	15.6	15.6
White British	214,385	207,118	421,503	15.2	15.3	15.3
Irish	1,549	1,413	2,962	22.7	21.7	22.2
Traveller of Irish heritage	843	841	1,684	64.0	65.0	64.5
Any other White background	8,449	7,814	16,263	23.1	22.5	22.8
Gypsy / Roma	1,169	1,181	2,350	53.6	54.8	54.2
Mixed	14,835	14,558	29,393	28.2	28.3	28.2
White and Black Caribbean	6,500	6,599	13,099	35.3	35.3	35.3
White and Black African	1,430	1,457	2,887	30.0	30.2	30.1
White and Asian	2,152	2,034	4,186	20.4	20.1	20.3
Any other mixed background	4,753	4,468	9,221	25.1	25.0	25.1
Asian	32,317	31,251	63,568	26.9	27.1	27.0
Indian	4,482	4,370	8,852	11.7	12.0	11.8
Pakistani	16,402	15,726	32,128	32.5	32.6	32.5
Bangladeshi	9,013	8,851	17,864	44.6	44.7	44.6
Any other Asian background	2,420	2,304	4,724	21.3	21.6	21.5
Black	24,803	24,187	48,990	38.5	38.2	38.4
Black Caribbean	8,022	7,909	15,931	31.1	31.2	31.2
Black African	14,128	13,737	27,865	44.6	44.1	44.4
Any other Black background	2,653	2,541	5,194	37.7	37.6	37.6
Chinese	580	570	1,150	10.8	10.5	10.6
Any other ethnic group	6,316	5,648	11,964	41.5	40.0	40.7
Classified	305,246	294,581	599,827	17,8	17.9	17.8
Unclassified[5]	11,280	10,345	21,625	19.3	19.5	19.4
All Pupils [1]	316,526	304,926	621,452	17.8	18.0	17.9

Pupils of compulsory school age and above

	Maintained Secondary[2]					
	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[3]			*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*[4]		
	Boys	*Girls*	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*
White	168,522	168,791	337,313	12.2	12.4	12.3
White British	160,221	160,961	321,182	12.0	12.2	12.1
Irish	1,173	1,275	2,448	18.3	18.8	18.5
Traveller of Irish heritage	260	260	520	42.0	48.2	44.9
Any other White background	6,508	5,908	12,416	20.1	18.9	19.5
Gypsy / Roma	360	387	747	49.8	46.7	48.1
Mixed	7,628	8,360	15,988	24.5	24.9	24.7
White and Black Caribbean	3,398	3,765	7,163	30.4	30.5	30.5
White and Black African	658	740	1,398	25.2	26.7	26.0
White and Asian	1,001	1,107	2,108	16.1	17.2	16.7
Any other mixed background	2,571	2,748	5,319	23.0	22.8	22.9
Asian	30,235	29,994	60,229	29.2	29.7	29.4
Indian	4,788	4,686	9,474	12.0	12.0	12.0
Pakistani	15,049	14,142	29,191	38.3	38.2	38.3
Bangladeshi	8,260	9,211	17,471	56.7	58.8	57.8
Any other Asian background	2,138	1,955	4,093	21.8	21.0	21.4
Black	17,284	17,687	34,971	33.7	33.0	33.3
Black Caribbean	6,371	6,502	12,873	28.5	27.4	27.9
Black African	8,715	9,089	17,804	39.4	38.9	39.2
Any other Black background	2,198	2,096	4,294	32.0	31.9	31.9
Chinese	627	623	1,250	10.3	10.5	10.4
Any other ethnic group	4,711	4,191	8,902	35.9	35.6	35.8
Classified	229,007	229,646	458,653	14.5	14.7	14.6
Unclassified [5]	10,538	9,589	20,127	12.4	12.6	12.5
All Pupils [1]	239,545	239,235	478,780	14.4	14.6	14.5

[1] Pupils of compulsory school age and above.
[2] includes middle schools as deemed.
[3] Excludes dually registered pupils and includes boarders. Free school meal statistics shown here may not match with those shown in tables 13, 14 and 15 due to difference in coverage.
[4] Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of pupils in each ethnic group.
[5] Information was not sought or refused.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent by each local education authority on free school meal provision in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in the latest year for which figures are available. [162076]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* My Department does not collect this information.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the joint exercise by his Department and the Food Standards Agency into nutritional standards in schools will be complete. [162094]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The jointly funded research exercise between the Department for Education and Skills and the Food Standards Agency is still underway. The results will be published late spring 2004 and will inform future policy decisions.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the number of parents whose children are receiving free school meals who supplement the meal with additional money or food. [162095]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills does not collect data on whether parents of children who are receiving free school meals supplement the meal with additional money or food.

School Sports

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the effects on schools of changes since 1997 in the level of investment in school sports in Crosby. [160566]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Government is investing more than £1 billion in England to transform physical education (PE), school sport and club links. The funding will help deliver an ambitious Public Service Agreement target, shared with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, to increase the percentage of five to 16 year olds who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006.

Spearheading delivery are School Sport Partnerships, which provide for groups of schools to work together to increase sports opportunities for all young people. Latest research, published by the Departments on 4 March shows that 68 per cent. of pupils in schools that have been in a Partnership for three years, are taking up the two hour entitlement, rising to 90 per cent. at Key Stage 3, Data is currently being collected from remaining Partnerships and will be published in April. Disaggregated results will be available at that time.

Significant funding is also being provided to specifically enhance PE and school sport facilities, with £3,331,000 being allocated from the New Opportunities Fund to schools in the Sefton LEA area.

Jim Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action his Department is taking to ensure that extended use of sports facilities in schools built with private finance is affordable for all sections of the community. [160934]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Schools PFI contracts are usually between a local authority and a private sector contractor. It is therefore for the authority to ensure that the extended use of sports facilities in schools is affordable for all sections of the community. The DfES does not have a direct role in these negotiations although it does issue standard contract guidance, which includes, among other things, provisions for safeguarding existing community use at current prices.

When a local authority puts forward a bid to the DfES for a schools PFI project, we expect to see that the project supports the provision of dual use facilities that can be offered to the wider community. In almost all cases this will include sports facility provision, which is of course a significant asset to the local community.

School Uniform Grants

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the local authorities in England which provide school uniform grants; and what the average grant was in each authority in the last year for which figures are available. [162577]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is not collected by the Department for Education and Skills.

Science Teaching (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been spent on science in schools in Chorley in each year since 1997. [162146]

Alan Johnson: We do not hold information on what has been spent on science in individual schools. However, we are investing heavily in science teaching and learning in schools. We are working in partnership with the Wellcome Trust to create a national network of science learning centres to deliver continuing professional development to science technicians and science teachers. We have introduced the science strand of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy to improve standards of teaching and learning for all 11 to 14-year-olds and promote engaging and challenging science lessons. QCA have reviewed the Programme of Study for Key Stage 4 to ensure that it provides a core of content that is suitable to all learners, making sure that all young people have an understanding of the importance of science and technology to the world around them and that those who continue to study science post-16 have sufficient knowledge and skills.

Special Educational Needs

Jonathan Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunals panel have reviewed a decision under part *(a)* C and *(b)* D of the Special Educational Needs Tribunal (Amendment) Regulations 2002. [162114]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 17 March 2004]*: Under regulation 37 of the Special Educational Needs Tribunal regulations 2001 parties may ask SENDIST to review a decision on the grounds that:

(a) its decision was wrongly made as a result of an error on the part of the tribunal staff;

(b) a party, who was entitled to be heard at the hearing but failed to appear or to be represented, had good and sufficient reason for failing to appear;

(c) there was an obvious error in the decision; or

(d) the interests of justice require.

The Tribunal does not hold comprehensive statistics on the grounds for review hearings. However, it has identified four cases since September 2002 in which panels have reviewed decisions because they might have included obvious errors. Over the same period panels have reviewed five decisions because the interests of justice appeared to require it.

Special School Teachers

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment has been made of the reasons for the change in teacher numbers in special schools between 2001 and 2002. [162680]

Mr. Miliband: Between January 2001 and January 2002 the number of full-time equivalent regular teachers employed in maintained special schools in England fell from 14,330 to 14,320. This reflected a fall in full-time equivalent pupil numbers from 89,780 to 88,740 over the same period.

Teachers/Teaching Assistants (Staffordshire)

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers there were in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* the Burton constituency in each of the last seven years. [161844]

Mr. Miliband: The following table shows the full time equivalent number of regular teachers in service in the maintained sector in *(a)* the former Staffordshire local education authority area and *(b)* Burton constituency in each year between 1997 and 2003, the latest year for which information available.

	Staffordshire	*Burton Constituency*
1997	1,260	120
1998	1,420	135
1999	1,510	157
2000	1,650	180
2001	1,900	204
2002	1,780	221
2003	2,380	301

Source:
Form 618g survey of teacher numbers and vacancies for local education authority data and Annual Schools' Census for constituency data.

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teaching assistants there were in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* the Burton constituency in each of the last seven years. [161843]

Mr. Miliband: The following table shows the full time equivalent number of teaching assistants in service in maintained schools in *(a)* the former Staffordshire local

education authority area and *(b)* Burton constituency in each year between 1997 and 2003, the latest year for which information is available.

	Staffordshire	*Burton constituency*
1997	8,510	894
1998	8,410	902
1999	8,590	920
2000	8,650	928
2001	8,720	936
2002	8,870	962
2003	9,140	968

Source:
Annual Schools Census.

UKeU

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on UKeU; and what discussions took place between UKeU and the Open University before it was launched. [162513]

Alan Johnson: The Government have provided £62 million to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for the eUniversities project. I understand HEFCE has provided £32.6 million to date to the eLearning Holding Company for investment in UKeU. A further £7 million has been used for the set up of the project and various public good programmes for the support of e-learning in higher education institutions.

The eUniversities project was overseen from its outset by the HEFCE working in partnership with other funding bodies and the UK higher education sector. It was steered by a group with a wide representation from the HE sector, and the then Vice-Chancellor of the Open University was a special adviser to that group. The Open University, working with Cambridge University, was also one of UKeU's first pilot providers and is engaged in the eChina programme managed by UKeU.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students have enrolled in UKeU since it was launched; and what the average cost has been of educating each student. [162514]

Alan Johnson: Students are enrolled in programmes provided by UK higher education institutions through UKeU. As at November 2003, I understand that 900 students were enrolled.

The £32 million invested to date through the Holding Company in UKeU has mainly supported the creation of an infrastructure to underpin e-learning in UK higher education institutions, rather than individual courses, whose costs per student vary according to their subject and content.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will merge UKeU with the Open University. [162515]

Alan Johnson: The future business direction and structure of UKeU is a matter for its board, taking into account the views of its major shareholder (the Holding Company—representing the views of the UK higher education sector) and its major funder, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). HEFCE is currently holding restructuring discussions with the boards of UKeU and the eLearning Holding Company, to identify the best way forward to secure value from the venture for the higher education sector.

UN Convention (Children's Rights)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in what ways his Department is carrying forward the Government's commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child. [161414]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 17 March 2004]:* Many of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child have been reflected in the Government's priorities for many years, such as ensuring the rights of children to education, health, housing and safety, freedom from poverty and the right to participate in decisions that affect them.

Recent action taken by the Government further to promote the provisions of the Convention includes the following:

the introduction of the Children Bill: This aims to improve the systems for preventing abuse and neglect such as that suffered by Victoria Climbié. In the spirit of Articles 4 and 12 of the Convention, it will with Parliamentary approval also set up a post of Children's Commissioner in England, whose task it will be to collect children's views, act as their champion and ensure that they have access to quick and easy complaints procedures;

the draft Advocacy Services and Representations Procedure (Children)(Amendment) Regulations 2004, which were laid on 11 March 2004 (SI 2004/719) under the Adoption and Children Act 2002. When made, these Regulations will impose on local authorities the duty to make arrangements for the provision of advocacy services for children and young people making or intending to make a complaint, again in the context of Article 12 of the Convention;

ratification on 24 June 2003 of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of Children in Armed Conflict in the context of Article 38;

the Sexual Offences Act 2003, which brought UK legislation on sexual offences in England and Wales into line with the requirements of the Optional on the sale of children, prostitution and pornography. When implemented in May 2004, it will introduce further new offences such as paying for sex with a child and causing or inciting child prostitution or pornography, as well as further extending the controls on child trafficking, in the context of Articles 34 and 35 of the Convention.

Undergraduates (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many undergraduate students in Greater London have declared themselves bankrupt in each year since 1992; and if he will make a statement. [158455]

Alan Johnson: The following table shows the number of student loan borrowers, both graduates and undergraduates whose awarding Local Education Authority is in the Greater London area, who have had bankruptcy orders made against them since 1992. There are no figures showing undergraduates as a separate group.

We are proposing through the Higher Education Bill to amend legislation in order to exclude student loans from bankruptcy debt so that student loan debt will not be written-off on discharge.

Borrowers in Greater London[1]

Bankrupt year[2]	*Number of Borrowers*[3,4,5,6]
1992	—
1993	—
1994	—
1995	—
1996	—
1997	1
1998	0
1999	1
2000	0
2001	5
2002	3
2003	21[7]
Total	31

[1] Borrowers whose awarding Authority [LEA] is in Greater London area.

[2] Calendar Year in which the borrower became bankrupt.

[3] Data shows the number of borrowers who have applied to SLC for a loan in respect of all eligible HE courses.

[4] Includes borrowers who may or may not have graduated from their course.

[5] Includes all types of students (including PGCE—Postgraduate Certificate of Education students).

[6] Data covers both types of student loan—Mortgage Style (including loans sold to the private sector) and Income Contingent.

[7] The increase in the numbers of bankruptcies in 2003 seems to be as a result of greater public awareness that students loans are provable in bankruptcy.

Source:
Student Loans Company

Workforce Reform

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to support the cost of workforce reform after 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [161991]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 17 March 2004]*: The implications of workforce reform after 2005–06 will be considered by my right hon. Friend as part of Spending Review 2004, which will determine spending plans for the years 2006–08. Decisions on priorities between and within the services for which he is responsible will not be made until later this year.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* suspended, *(b)* dismissed, *(c)* prosecuted and *(d)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what the amounts involved in each of those cases listed were. [154651]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was established on 29 May 2002. Since its establishment, no staff in the office, its agencies or Government offices have been *(a)* suspended, *(b)* dismissed, *(c)* prosecuted or *(d)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud.

Local Government

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local government employees there were in each year since 1997. [162674]

Mr. Raynsford: Figures for Great Britain, which are available in an article published in 'Economic Trends' (September 2003), show the following numbers of local government employees for the years between 1997 and 2002.

	Number of local government employees (GB)
1997	2,593,000
1998	2,579,000
1999	2,704,000
2000	2,682,000
2001	2,735,000
2002	2,741,000

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150284]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister currently occupies approximately 54,000 m^2 of space in inner London. This includes, where appropriate, office space for Ministers and their advisers as it is not possible to separate this out. The figure for outer London is approximately 1,400 m^2.

Space is defined as the internal area i.e. includes toilets, storage, basement etc. rather than useable office space.

Dee Estuary

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the undertaking given during his visit to the Airbus factory in Broughton, Flintshire on 5 March to ensure that permission is granted for the Dee Estuary to be dredged. [162685]

Keith Hill: I understand that the competent authorities are considering this issue under the terms of the Habitats Directive.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Prosser: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the future staffing of his Department's Hemel office. [161477]

Yvette Cooper: Any decisions on the staffing levels of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Hemel Hempstead office will be taken in the light of the overall needs and priorities of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and other customers, in line with Government policy.

Fire and Rescue Services Bill

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what help will he give to help retain fire stations under the new Fire Bill. [181866]

Mr. Raynsford: The Fire and Rescue Services Bill re-enacts the existing statutory duty for a fire and rescue authority to make provision for extinguishing fires and protecting life and property from fires within its area. The Bill also includes duties covering the role of fire and rescue authorities in dealing with road traffic accidents and other serious emergencies and promoting fire safety.

The Government's previously recommended standards of fire cover will be superseded from 1 April 2004 when Fire and Rescue Authorities implement their first agreed Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs). These plans will detail locally determined response standards on the basis of Authorities' assessment of risks to life in the community.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has provided authorities with written guidance and supported the development of their IRMPs with an HM Fire Service Inspectorate-led implementation support team. By mid-April the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will also have provided each fire and rescue service with a computer toolkit known as Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) that models the impact of fire cover in reducing risk.

The outcome of individual IRMPs, in some cases, will be the re-distribution of fire and rescue resources, including possible relocation of stations and appliances, where this is determined by the assessment of risk to the community. All IRMPs are subject to public consultation.

The draft National Fire and Rescue Framework recognises the vital contribution of the retained section of the service and acknowledges the need to find solutions to these recruitment and retention challenges. That is why the Government announced on 15 December 2003 that there would be a review of issues affecting the retained section of the service. The review will examine the issues that contribute to these challenges, including equality and diversity, public awareness, engagement with the business community, deployment, community participation, role, reward and conditions of service. The recommendations of the review will be submitted to the Practitioners' Forum in the summer. [181866]

Growth Area Funding

Harry Cohen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will identify the two sites referred to in the London Leyton area masterplan for which £150,000 growth area funding has been provided. [162727]

Keith Hill: Growth area funding of £150,000 has been awarded to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the production of a masterplan for the Leyton area. The plan will provide a detailed development framework focusing on the development potential of two sites in close proximity to existing and potential transportation nodes. The two sites referred to are:

(1) the Lea Bridge Station Area; and

(2) Leyton Station and High Street South.

Housing

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his Answer of 5 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1185W, on houses in multiple occupation, what plans he has to introduce a cap on the total licence fee payable per house in multiple occupation. [162238]

Keith Hill: The Government have no plans to cap the overall fee payable in respect of the whole house in multiple occupation. The cap will apply only to the individual units within the Houses in Multiple Occupation.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the levels of net debt were for each local authority in England in the most recent year for which figures are available. [161499]

Mr. Raynsford: Levels of net debt for each local authority in England at 31 March 2003 (latest available data) are available on the Local Government Finance section of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister website at: http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/stats/debt3.xls.

It should be noted that authorities with high levels of debt are generally those that have undertaken capital investment and that long-term borrowing to finance capital expenditure is currently regulated through the issue of credit approvals and, from 1 April 2004, will be subject to the Prudential System.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether a capped local authority will receive additional financial support from central Government to compensate for the costs of re-billing. [162675]

Mr. Raynsford: No. Any authority that was capped "in year" would have to fund the re-billing costs from its own budget.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate his Department has made of the cost to the average *(a)* district, *(b)* county, *(c)* London, *(d)* metropolitan and *(e)* unitary authority in England of re-issuing council tax bills following capping. [162676]

Mr. Raynsford: The cost involved for an individual local authority would depend on the size of the authority and other local circumstances.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how much money the Treasury plans to set aside in 2005 for local government grants; [162450]

(2) how much money the Treasury set aside for local government grants in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 1999, *(c)* 2001 and *(d)* 2003. [162451]

Mr. Raynsford: The total of Government grant for local authorities' revenue spending, covering in the main Revenue Support Grant, National Non-Domestic Rates and specific grants in each of these years is as follows:

	£ billion
1997–98	35.767
1999–2000	39.545
2001–02	44.661
2003–04	51.551
2004–05	54.860

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the range of new responsibilities to be undertaken by local authorities in the next financial year. [162302]

Mr. Raynsford: New responsibilities that could constitute new burdens for local authorities are identified with the Local Government Association in the relevant Spending Review. Relevant new burdens were taken into account in the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2004–05.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1710W, what the value was *(a)* of the grant paid to the Isle of Wight for 2004–05 and *(b)* which would have been calculated for the grant in 2004–05 using the area cost adjustment methodology proposed, but subsequently suspended for 2003–04. [162506]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is as follows:

(a) This is a good settlement for the Isle of Wight who will receive £101.6 million in formulae grant in 2004–5. On a like for like basis, formulae grant for the Isle of Wight has increased by 7 per cent. since 2003–4.

(b) At the 2003–4 provisional settlement, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister calculated the area cost adjustment (ACA) for the Isle of Wight separately from that of Hampshire. As a result the Isle of Wight had an ACA factor of one.

Had the ACA been calculated in this way for the 2004–5 settlement it is likely that the Isle of Wight would again have an ACA factor of one compared to, for example 1.0433 for education, and that the authority would have received less revenue support grant in 2004–5.

However, quantifying exactly the effect on grant in 2004–5 of calculating the ACA separately for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight in 2003–4 and 2004–5 can only be done at disproportionate cost. This is because it would require the re-calculation of the 2003–4 and 2004–5 ACA and the 2003–4 and 2004–5 settlements including the floor and ceiling calculations. This is a lengthy process.

New Deal for Communities

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the administration budget was for each New Deal for Communities partnership for each financial year since 1999–2000; and what the estimated administration budget for each such partnership is for financial years (i) 2004–2005 and (ii) 2005–06. [160342]

Yvette Cooper: The New Deal for Communities (NDC) Programme has 39 NDC Partnerships and £2 billion has been committed to them over the 10 years of the NDC Programme. The 17 Round 1 Partnerships entered their delivery phase in 2000–01 and the 22 Round 2 Partnerships entered their delivery phase in 2001–02. The following table provides figures for the administration budget for each partnership for the financial years 1999–2000 and the estimate for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

The NDC Partnerships went through two phases before they entered their delivery phase. Phase 1 involved building up a partnership, phase 2 involved developing a delivery plan for the 10 years of the programme and, where possible, developing "quick win" projects. During Phase 1 and Phase 2 Management and Administration costs is expected to be high as the partnerships were in the initial stages of setting up and building a partnerships.

Overall, partnerships may only spend up to 10 per cent. of their 10-year budget total on M and A during the-year life of their programme. Profiles vary, and some partnerships have spent more that 10 per cent. per annum on M and A so far. However, we fully expect this to be reconciled by the time each partnership reaches its final year.

NDC Management and Administration Budget

Partnership	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05* [1]	*2005–06* [1]
Newham	332,786	490,000	515,000	480,000	700,000	600,000	650,000
Shoreditch	400,000	340,000	340,000	340,000	590,000	540,000	540,000
Aylesbury	400,000	168,750	304,800	383,212	688,370	679,800	497,100
Ocean	400,000	599,000	680,000	680,000	670,000	620,000	620,000
South Kilburn	0	240,000	335,000	496,000	496,000	696,000	696,000
North Fulham	0	299,500	380,000	520,000	500,000	528,472	520,000
EC1 Islington	0	400,000	450,000	670,000	500,000	500,000	518,000
Clapham Park	0	400,000	450,000	584,000	563,800	563,154	639,000
New Cross	0	427,670	227,670	482,119	710,732	500,000	501,497
Seven Sisters	0	208,000	612,000	635,000	553,000	550,000	550,000
Brighton	362,350	628,680	775,564	660,178	437,451	543,991	572,532
Southampton	10,000	387,000	362,000	385,850	450,000	600,000	480,000
Plymouth	10,000	40,000	225,610	461,957	424,000	380,000	Not yet agreed
Bristol	320,000	450,000	500,000	518,000	533,000	590,000	540,000
Luton	0	0	375,000	600,000	500,900	Not yet agreed	Not yet agreed
Norwich	0	395,900	425,900	425,900	450,000	475,000	450,000
Leicester	198,000	542,000	985,000	800,000	692,000	620,000	600,000
Nottingham	200,000	293,000	360,000	482,000	520,000	500,000	500,000
Derby	10,000	15,000	299,000	428,000	500,000	425,000	425,000
Sandwell	400,000	546,968	599,437	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Walsall	0	223,000	250,000	465,000	450,000	455,000	260,000
Coventry	0	260,000	385,002	519,021	555,000	555,000	550,000
Wolverhampton	0	255,000	173,844	435,526	577,076	594,000	612,000
Kings Norton	300,000	262,452	301,692	237,189	526,941	735,428	507,582
Aston	0	235,000	116,500	520,000	520,000	535,000	550,000
Doncaster	0	0	344,478	453,344	426,352	440,000	450,000

NDC Management and Administration Budget

Partnership	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05* [1]	*2005–06* [1]
Sheffield	0	0	680,000	680,000	506,587	506,587	506,587
Bradford	0	314,000	460,600	514,700	502,200	500,000	500,000
Hull	0	731,000	791,360	577,190	500,000	500,000	450,000
Knowsley	0	0	306,969	524,627	504,820	780,611	1,168,580
Kensington[1]	0	479,619	574,097	619,000	650,000	670,306	800,000
Manchester	204,153	605,878	622,366	642,568	650,000	600,000	500,000
Oldham	0	0	151,324	254,196	360,700	405,000	409,000
Salford	0	0	204,571	289,997	740,000	740,000	740,000
Rochdale	0	0	282,000	1,357,000	2,114,000	3,044,000	2,858,000
Hartlepool	0	339,965	258,000	461,355	690,000	690,040	691,880
Newcastle	350,000	200,000	388,000	650,000	670,000	600,000	575,000
Middlesbrough	350,000	251,400	420,830	300,000	477,000	588,000	543,000
Sunderland	0	300,000	305,000	397,000	839,000	400,000	500,000
Total	4,247,289	11,334,782	16,218,614	20,429,929	23,238,929	23,750,389	22,970,758

[1] Please note that figures given for 2004–05 and 2005–06 are estimates and some are not yet agreed

Parliamentary Questions

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many parliamentary questions have been tabled to his Department since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days; and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157742]

Yvette Cooper: Since 1 January 2003 to 27 February 2004 *(a)* 2,941 ordinary written parliamentary questions and *(b)* 548 named day parliamentary questions have been tabled to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, of these *(a)* 87 per cent. were answered within 10 working days and *(b)* 84 per cent. were answered by the specified date.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister endeavours to reply to all parliamentary questions within parliamentary deadlines wherever possible.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who is responsible for the *(a)* design, *(b)* production and *(c)* distribution of the leaflets (i) "Your Say: A new opportunity for the North East", (ii) "Your Say: A new opportunity for the North West", (iii) "Your Say: A new opportunity for Yorkshire and the Humber", (iv) "Your Say: Business and Jobs" and (v) "Your Say: Assembly powers and responsibilities"; and at what cost. [162423]

Mr. Raynsford: The "Your Say" campaign is aimed at informing the public in the north west, north east and Yorkshire and Humber regions about the Government's proposals for giving the region's voters an opportunity to say if they want to have regional Government.

The Newcastle and Manchester based advertising agency Robson Brown was commissioned to design the three leaflets, "Your Say: A new opportunity" for the North East/North West/Yorkshire and the Humber and "Your Say: Business and Jobs" and "Your Say: Assembly" powers and responsibilities.

Production has been carried out by Robson Brown and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's print procurement team.

Distribution has been handled by the relevant Government Offices and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's retained distribution house.

The combined design costs of the "Your Say: A new opportunity" leaflets totalled £8,750.

Production costs to date of the "Your Say: A new opportunity leaflets" totals £28,586 for delivery of the following:

North West—171,200 leaflets

Yorkshire and the Humber—171,200 leaflets

North East—139,200 leaflets.

Design and production costs of "Your Say: Business and Jobs" totals £1,780 (5,000 copies per region).

Design and production costs of "Your Say: Assembly powers" and responsibilities totals £1,400 (5,000 copies per region).

Social Housing (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new houses have been built in the social rented sector in Greater London in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [162346]

Keith Hill: The Housing Statistics Annual 2003 gives the number of completions of new dwellings built by Registered Social Landlords and local authorities in London as follows:

	RSL completions	*Local authority completions*	*Total completions*
1997–98	4,329	52	4,381
1998–99	3,198	35	3,233
1999–2000	2,934	0	2,934
2000–01	4,162	158	4,320
2001–02	3,512	27	3,539
2002–03	4,258	71	4,329

Data on the cost of completions is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Sunset Clauses

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his policy on the use of sunset clauses in legislation; and which Acts containing such clauses relevant to his Department were passed in each year since 1997. [149329]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister actively promotes the better regulation agenda, part of which is the use of sunset clauses where appropriate. Policy officials are aware of guidance that encourages them to consider time limiting (or "sunsetting") at an early stage of policy development

and gives specific circumstances where this may be appropriate. The form in which particular aspects of policy are embodied in legislation is a matter for careful consideration by Ministers, who are advised in this respect by officials in conjunction with lawyers and Parliamentary Counsel. The use of a sunset clause (as of any other type of clause) would be the result of such consideration.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established on 29 May 2002, as a result of machinery of government changes. Since then, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is aware of just one sunset clause in primary legislation for which it is responsible, namely section 1(7) of the Fire Services Act 2003, which prevents the making of an order (fixing firemen's conditions of service) more than two years after commencement of the Act (on the date of Royal Assent, 13 November 2003) except for an order revoking a previous order.

Telecommunications Masts

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the minimum distance is that a telecommunications mast may be from houses. [161241]

Yvette Cooper: The Stewart Report on Mobile Phones and Health, published in May 2000, did not recommend that the erection of mobile phone masts should be restricted in residential areas and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to introduce such a restriction.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will take steps to ensure that mobile telephone operatives consider the case for mast sharing before any application for new masts. [161242]

Yvette Cooper: Planning Policy Guidance Note 8, "Telecommunications" (PPG8), makes clear the expectation that developers should provide evidence to local planning authorities that they have carefully considered the use of existing masts, buildings and other structures before seeking to erect any new mast, regardless of size. The authority may be justified in refusing prior approval or planning permissions if it considers the evidence regarding the consideration of such alternative sites is not satisfactory.

Mr. Spring: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will amend the General Permitted Development Order 1995, section 17 (A), to bring telecommunications masts and base stations erected on land owned by Network Rail into the full local authority planning process. [163037]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently taking forward a wide-ranging review of permitted development rights (PDRs), including those available to railway undertakers. On 10 September 2003 we published a research study on permitted development rights from Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Ltd. This includes a review of the operation of the PDRs available to railway undertakers.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is considering the Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners' report's recommendations carefully and when we decide which of the suggested reforms should be taken forward, we will undertake a public consultation.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development issued by his office on 11 November 2002 covers the Tetra project. [161415]

Yvette Cooper: Tetra is the acronym for the TErrestrial Trunked RAdio, which is a standard for digital private mobile radio. Airwave mm O2 is currently rolling out a Tetra system on behalf of the Home Office for police forces nation-wide. Airwave have agreed to work to the guidance contained in the Code Of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to amend Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (revised) (PPG8) in relation to the Tetra project. [161416]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to change Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (revised) at present.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Scottish Executive concerning Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (revised) (PPG8) in relation to the Tetra project. [161417]

Yvette Cooper: The Scottish Executive was consulted prior to the publication of Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (revised).

TREASURY

Money Laundering

Bob Spink: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what guidance he has published for estate agents on the requirements of the money laundering regulations which comes into force on 1 March; and if he will make a statement. [162457]

Ruth Kelly: The Money Laundering Regulations 2003, which came into force from 1 March 2004, impose high-level objectives to counter money laundering upon those carrying out business in the regulated sector. The Government, in line with the approach taken in the 1993 Money Laundering Regulations, does not issue guidance on the Regulations, instead encouraging industry bodies, regulators and supervisory authorities to provide guidance upon how best to meet the requirements of the Regulations. This allows industry the opportunity to tailor procedures to the differing circumstances and risks specific to individual sectors, thereby encouraging a more efficient, proportionate and flexible way of complying with the regulatory requirements. We are aware that the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RIGS) and the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA) have drawn up guidance for members; the RIGS guidance to estate agent members and real estate auctioneers is also available to non-members and the general public on its web site.

Industry guidance can be submitted to Treasury for approval.

Bob Spink: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether a photcopy of a conveyancing solicitor's or conveyancer's identification documentation will be sufficient to enable estate agents to meet the money laundering regulations. [162458]

Ruth Kelly: The Money Laundering Regulations 2003 require, among other things, that identification procedures are maintained, in certain circumstances, which require the collection of satisfactory evidence of identity for an applicant for business.

We are encouraging, and working with, industry bodies to provide guidance as to what procedures might satisfy this requirement. Ultimately it would be for the courts to decide in individual cases whether identification procedures were sufficient.

Pensioner Population

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the pensioner population is in *(a)* each London borough and *(b)* England. [162407]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Simon Hughes, dated 22 March 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your question concerning the most recent pensioner population for England and each of the London boroughs. (62407)

Attached is a table showing the mid-2002 population estimate of England, the City of London and each of the London boroughs for persons of pensionable age (65 years and over for males and 60 years and over for females).

Population of pensionable age in England and the London boroughs: mid-2002

Area	*Population of pensionable age*[1] *(thousands)*
England	9,100.7
City of London	1.1
Barking and Dagenham	26.8
Barnet	52.1
Bexley	40.2
Brent	36.5
Bromley	57.3
Camden	24.6
Croydon	49.9
Ealing	40.7
Enfield	44.0
Greenwich	31.9
Hackney	22.1
Hammersmith and Fulham	20.6
Haringey	25.0
Harrow	35.1
Havering	45.7
Hillingdon	39.2
Hounslow	28.2
Islington	20 7
Kensington and Chelsea	23.7
Kingston upon Thames	22.2
Lambeth	28.4
Lewisham	31.4
Merton	27.9
Newham	25.5
Redbridge	38.4
Richmond upon Thames	26.6
Southwark	29.3
Sutton	30.0
Tower Hamlets	21.1
Waltham Forest	29.4
Wandsworth	30.6
Westminster	25.5

[1] 65 and over for males; 60 and over for females.

Source:

Office for National Statistics, Mid-2002 Population Estimates

Animal Feed

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what quantity of *(a)* soya and *(b)* maize gluten was imported for animal feed in each of the last five years; and which companies were the main importers in each case. [162620]

John Healey: HM Customs and Excise are responsible for the collection of data on imports. It is not possible to identify the quantities of imported soya and maize gluten for animal feed from the other items in the commodity code data held.

Birth Defects

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many birth defects there were in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each strategic health authority in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [162216]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Paul Burstow, dated 22 March 2002:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking for the number of birth defects in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* strategic health authorities since 1997.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for maintaining the National Congenital Anomaly System (NCAS) notifications in England and Wales. These notifications are collected only for live and stillbirths (e.g. terminations are excluded) and are provided by NHS Trusts on a voluntary basis either directly to ONS or via local congenital anomaly registers that exchange data with ONS. In 1997 there were no registers exchanging information with NCAS. By 2001, NCAS received more complete information from four local congenital anomaly registers through multi-source ascertainment.

As a result, numbers of notifications in England and Wales have increased since 1997. These registers cover all births in Wales and 24 per cent. of births in England. For the remaining areas NCAS relies solely on SD56 notification forms and is likely to be less complete. Up to eight malformations are recorded on the system for each baby.

Estimates of the figures requested, covering the period 1997–2001 (latest available year) are shown in the attached table.

Estimated numbers of malformations recorded, 1997–2001, England, Government Office Regions, Strategic Health Authorities

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*
England	6,753	6,516	8,575	9,273	8,027
Government Office Regions					
North East	211	276	289	215	145
North West	1,122	1,118	1,257	1,744	1,471
Yorkshire and the Humber	913	740	1,103	1,186	973
East Midlands	534	515	1,593	1,480	1,565
West Midlands	713	705	754	690	623
East	624	634	693	737	721
London	951	907	871	1,375	1,157
South East	985	980	968	991	762
South West	634	641	1,047	855	610
Strategic Health Authorities					
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	292	276	256	207	220
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	148	192	175	312	311
Essex	184	166	262	218	190
North West London	185	204	245	568	490
North Central London	113	77	89	99	114
North East London	187	202	171	204	175
South East London	164	195	145	202	145
South West London	302	229	221	302	233
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	147	159	190	141	94
County Durham and Tees	130	117	99	74	51
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	266	176	250	256	216
West Yorkshire	169	196	202	270	170
Cumbria and Lancashire	322	339	327	299	287
Greater Manchester	532	537	643	610	585
Cheshire and Merseyside	268	242	287	835	599
Thames Valley	219	274	272	331	225
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	190	200	233	158	159
Kent and Medway	158	153	185	244	166
Surrey and Sussex	418	353	278	258	212
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	238	254	284	324	276
South West Peninsula	271	318	665	443	262
Dorset and Somerset	125	69	98	88	72
South Yorkshire	478	368	651	660	587
Trent	277	270	1,083	916	817
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	257	245	510	564	748
Shropshire and Staffordshire	185	217	218	192	141
Birmingham and The Black Country	339	316	355	354	347
Coventry, Warwickshire, Hereford and Worcester	189	172	181	144	135

Source:
Estimates based on numbers of babies notified to National Congenital Anomaly System at 31 July 2002 (Health Statistics Quarterly no. 16 Annual update: Congenital anomaly statistics—notifications 2001) and the number of malformations recorded for each notified case.

Cancer

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the latest death rate figures for cancer are for England; and what they were in 1996–97. [162770]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Stephen Hesford, dated 22 March 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking for the latest death rate figures for cancer for England; and what these were in 1996–97. (162770)

The latest year for which data are available is 2002. Figures for cancer are shown in the table below for the calendar years 1996,1997 and 2002.

Age-standardised death rate[1] for cancer[2] by sex in England, 1996,1997 and 2002[3]

Calendar year	*Males*	*Females*
1996	248.4	169.4
1997	240.6	166.7
2002[4]	233.9	161.1

[1] Death rate at all ages per 100,000 population, age-standardised to the European standard population.

[2] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes 140–208 for the years 1996 and 1997, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes C00-C97 for 2002.

[3] Figures are based on deaths occurring in each calendar year.

[4] The introduction of ICD-10 for coding cause of death in 2001 resulted in the number of deaths coded as cancer at all ages increasing by 2.5% for males and 2.2% for females. For this reason rates are not completely comparable with those for years before this date and the figures should therefore be interpreted with caution. The effect of the change in classification in 2001 on deaths from cancer was published in Health Statistics Quarterly in May 2002.*

* Office for National Statistics. Results of the ICD-10 bridge coding study, England and Wales, 1999. Health Statistics Quarterly 14 (2002), 75–83.

Carers

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of carers aged 65 years and over in Greater London. [162340]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Simon Hughes, dated 22 March 2004:

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking what estimate has been made of the number of carers aged 65 years and over in Greater London.

Figures from the Census 2001 National Report for England and Wales indicate that there were 96,132 people aged 65 and over in the London Government Office Region (GOR) providing unpaid care. The London GOR is equivalent to the administrative area of the Greater London Authority covering the 32 London Boroughs and the City of London.

The information below has been extracted from the CD supplement to the 2001 Census National Report for England and Wales, which is available in the House of Commons Library. The table shows the distribution of these carers according to the number of hours of care provided per week.

Number of people aged 65 and over providing unpaid care in the London GOR, 2001

London GOR

	All people Provides care:			
	1–19 hours	*20–49 hours*	*50 or more hours*	*Total*
65 to 74	36,917	6,921	18,625	62,463
75 to 84	14,050	3,082	11,622	28,754
85 to 89	1,573	451	1,920	3,944
90 and over	382	141	448	971
Total	52,922	10,595	32,615	96,132

Source:
Table S025 Census 2001 National Report for England and Wales

Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases of computer misuse there were in his Department in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003, broken down by each category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [162394]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The information is as follows:

Category of Misuse	*Cases Investigated*
HM Treasury	
1997	
Misuse of Email	1
1 case resulted in disciplinary action.	
2003	
Misuse of Internet	1
1 case resulted in disciplinary action.	
HM Customs and Excise	
1997	
Nil	Nil
2003	
Accessing Data Bases	2
Misuse of Email	158
Misuse of Internet	12
Misuse of PNC	4
76 cases resulted in disciplinary action.	
Inland Revenue	
1997	
Cases were not categorised	4
4 cases resulted in disciplinary action.	

Category of Misuse	*Cases Investigated*
2003	
Cases Investigated may include more than one category of offence.	
Category of Misuse	Offences Investigated
Misuse of email	107
Unauthorised Access	146
Misuse of Internet	4
Unauthorised disclosure	4
Recreational Browsing	5
Other	62
322 cases resulted in disciplinary action.	

Death Certification

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the new proposals on death certification will affect the recording of deaths involving MRSA. [162217]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Paul Burstow, dated 22 March 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning how the new proposals on death certification will affect the recording of deaths involving MRSA. I am replying in his absence.

The proposal to reform the coroner and death certification service is likely to improve information about MRSA infection at or shortly before death in a number of ways:

The emphasis on improved training for doctors in how to complete death certificates and the scrutiny of all certificates by specially trained medical examiners will improve the quality and completeness of information collected.

The ability to link fact and cause of death to laboratory or patient records of infection will make it possible to determine how many people die following a diagnosis of invasive MRSA infection.

Specific research studies would still be needed to determine how much MRSA, or other health care associated infections, contribute to the likelihood of dying amongst patients with the same underlying illness and treatment.

Deaths (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many deaths in people over 60 in each year since 1997 in Greater London were due to *(a)* cancer, *(b)* coronary heart disease and *(c)* falls. [163072]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Simon Hughes, dated 22 March 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many deaths in people aged over 60 in each year since 1997 in Greater London were due to *(a)* cancer, *(b)* coronary heart disease and *(c)* falls. (163072)

The latest year for which data are available is 2002. Figures for cancer, ischemic (otherwise known as coronary) heart disease and falls in persons aged 60 and over are shown in the attached table for each year from 1997 to 2002.

The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) for the years 1997 to 2000, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) for 2001 and 2002. The introduction of

ICD-10 has meant that the numbers of deaths from cancer in 2001 and 2002 are not completely comparable with those from previous years (see footnotes to table).

Number of deaths from (a) cancer, (b) ischemic heart disease, and (c) falls[1] in persons aged 60 and over, Greater London[2] 1997 to 2002[3]

Calendar year	*(a) Cancer[4]*	*(b) Ischemic heart disease*	*(c) Falls[5]*
1997	12,947	11,536	150
1998	12,889	11,398	167
1999	12,328	10,955	163
2000	12,031	10,207	176
2001[4]	12,257	9,641	139
2002[4]	12,165	9,316	121

[1] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) for the years 1997 to 2000, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) for 2001 and 2002. The codes used are listed below:

Cancer—ICD-9 140–208;/CD-70 C00-C97;

Ischemic heart disease—ICD-9 410–414; ICD-10120–125;

Falls—ICD-9 E880-E888 excluding E887; ICD-10 W00-W19.

[2] Usual residents of London Government Office Region

[3] Figures are based on deaths occurring in each calendar year.

[4] The introduction of ICD-10 for coding cause of death in 2001 resulted in the number of deaths coded as cancer at all ages increasing by 2.5 per cent. for males and 2.2 per cent. for females. For this reason numbers are not completely comparable with those for years before this date. The effect of the introduction of ICD-10 is also known to vary by age and figures at age 60 and over should therefore be interpreted with caution. The effect of the change in classification in 2001 on deaths from cancer is described in a report published in May 2002.*

[5] The data for falls for 1997 to 2000 exclude fractures of unspecified cause (ICD-9 E887), so data for these years are comparable to those for 2001 onwards. The effect of the change in classification in 2001 on deaths from falls is described in an article published in August 2003.**

* Office for National Statistics. Results of the ICD-10 bridge coding study, England and Wales, 1999. Health Statistics Quarterly 14 (2002), 75–83.

** Griffiths C and Rooney C. The effect of the introduction of ICD-10 on mortality from injury and poisoning in England and Wales. Health Statistics Quarterly 19 (2003), 10–21.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total cost is of the advertising campaign for tax credits. [157966]

Dawn Primarolo: The total cost to date of advertising for tax credits in 2003/04 is £10.6 million.

Drug-related Deaths

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many drug-related deaths there were in people aged under *(a)* 21, *(b)* 30 and *(c)* 40 years in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough in the last year for which figures are available. [162409]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Simon Hughes, dated 22 March 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your question asking how many drug-related deaths there were in people aged under *(a)* 21, *(b)* 30, *(c)* 40 in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London Borough in the latest year for which figures are available. (162409)

The most recent year for which figures are available is 2002. In Greater London in that year there were 7 deaths related to drug poisoning in persons aged under 21, 69 in persons aged 21–29, and 111 in persons aged 30–39. Numbers of deaths certified as due to drug poisoning for each London Borough are given in the attached table for persons aged under 40. With the exception of Lambeth (7 deaths at ages under 30), there were too few deaths at ages under 30 in all other London Boroughs to release figures without risk of disclosure.

Deaths related to drug poisoning,[1] at ages under 40[2] by London Borough,[3] 2002[4]

	Under 40
City of London	*
Barking and Dagenham	*
Barnet	*
Bexley	*
Brent	*
Bromley	10
Camden	11
Croydon	7
Haling	*
Enfield	*
Greenwich	7
Hackney	5
Hammersmith and Fulham	6
Haringey	9
Harrow	*
Havering	5
Hillingdon	*
Hounslow	6
Islington	7
Kensington and Chelsea	5
Kingston upon Thames	*
Lambeth	15
Lewisham	11
Merton	6
Newham	7
Redbridge	*
Richmond upon Thames	*
Southwark	9
Sutton	6
Tower Hamlets	9
Waltham Forest	*
Wandsworth	*
Westminster City of	6

[1] Defined using the following codes from the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision for 2002: F11-F16, X40-X44, X60-X64, Y10-Y14, X85.

[2] Data are for persons aged between 0 and 39

[3] Usual residence of the deceased by London Borough.

[4] Data are for deaths occurring per calendar year

* Fewer than five deaths

Source:

Office for National Statistics.

Earnings

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average percentage change in *(a)* public sector pay and *(b)* non-manual earnings has been in each year since 1993. [162291]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Mike Hancock, dated 22 March 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question for a list of the percentage change in *(a)* public sector pay and *(b)* non-manual earnings has been in each year since 1993. I am replying in his absence. (162291)

I attach a table showing the percentage change in public sector pay and non-manual earnings.

Average earnings are estimated from the 2003 New Earnings Survey (NES) and are provided for full-time employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period, by their place of work. This is the standard definition used for NES tables. The NES does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

The NES, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in Great Britain. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes, but because of its sampling frame, it has difficulty capturing data on people with very low pay. It is therefore likely to under-represent relatively low paid staff earning below the tax threshold.

Estimates for changes in non-manual earnings from 1993 to 2002 are coded from the non- manual classification in the Standard Occupational Classification 1990. Non-manual tables were not produced as part of the 2003 NES. This is because the data have been coded on the Standard Occupational Classification 2000 which does not differentiate between manual and non-manual employees. An alternative to the manual and non-manual split has been derived from the NES, based on the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) for the 2003 estimate. However, the two classification methods do produce different results and comparisons between the two should only be used with caution.

Percentage change in (a) public sector pay and (b) non-manual earnings since 1993.

Year	*Public Sector*	*Non-manual*
1993 to 1994	2.5	2.9
1994 to 1995	—	3.1
1995 to 1996	4.2	4.4
1996 to 1997	3.3	4.5
1997 to 1998	3.6	4.5
1998 to 1999	4.0	3.8
1 999 to 2000	3.6	4.5
2000 to 2001	5.3	6.0
2001 to 2002	3.6	4.6
2002 to 2003	3.7	2.1

Notes:
The data used for 2002 to 2003 was derived using the NS-SEC.
Source for earnings data:
New Earnings Survey, April 2003
1. The Inter-Departmental Business Register was used to derive the Public sector.
Comprising:
(a) Central Government.
Government departments and establishments, the National Health Service and various government-financed organisations. (The Armed Forces are not covered by the NES).
(b) Local government.
Local Government authorities (including education authorities), police service and various other organisations.
(c) Public corporations.
Nationalised industries, NHS Trusts, and other publicly-constituted trading organisations.
2. Information is provided for average gross weekly earnings including overtime to and relates full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay period was unaffected by absence.
3. Data for Public Sector percentage change is unavailable for 1994 -1995 due to a change in 1995 in sectoral coding, it was not possible to calculate the percentage increases for the sectors.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list for *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* all workers in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough the (A) weekly median earnings and (B) distribution of earnings for those earning (1) under the point below which 10 per cent. of earners fall and (2) the point above which 10 per cent. of earners exceed. [162410]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Simon Hughes, dated 22 March 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question which asked for details of earnings in Greater London and each London Borough. I am replying in his absence.

The attached table shows the median and percentile earnings.

Average earnings are estimated from the 2003 New Earnings Survey (NES) and are provided for full-time employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period, by their place of work. This is the standard definition used for NES tables. The NES does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

The NES, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in Great Britain. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes, but because of its sampling frame, it has difficulty capturing data on people with very low pay. It is therefore likely to under-represent relatively low paid staff earning below the tax threshold.

The New Earnings Survey publication criteria ensures that all estimates are undisclosive and of reliable quality. A large number of estimates have been removed from the lists due to the suppression criteria. The information is based on the 2003 NES, the latest survey for which data are available. The area of Greater London is defined by grouping together all the boroughs of London.

Full time employees gross weekly earnings (£) for Greater London and each London Borough, April 2003

	Male			*Female*			*All Employees*		
	10% earned less than	*Median (£)*	*10% earned more than*	*10 % earned less than*	*Median (£)*	*10 % earned more than*	*10% earned less than*	*Median (£)*	*10% earned more than*
Greater London	282.4	552.9	1260.1	242.8	447.9	821.6	264.0	501.6	1103.7
City of London	412.8	834.9	2012.7	338.9	566.2	1302.8	383.9	706.3	1817.9
Barking and Dagenham	268.8	524.4	1091.5	[1]—	363.9	[1]—	246.6	481.5	971.3
Barnet		483.8	[1]—	244.9	409.5	666.9	[1]—	448.2	[1]—
Bexley	240.2	438.3	791.6	211.6	344.0	617.8	238.3	412.3	744.5
Brent	291.9	442.1	822.7	228.9	368.5	653.8	255.4	411.3	735.9
Bromley	[1]—	373.1	[1]—	194.7	307.6	599.0	200.1	333.2	822.1
Camden	313.0	591.4	1218.6	290.4	492.1	863.7	304.6	550.9	1088.3
Croydon	274.9	500.5	885.0	224.4	348.7	624.1	245.8	417.7	767.9
Ealing	270.1	459.6	909.8	232.2	423.4	761.9	257.6	446.2	842.3

Full time employees gross weekly earnings (£) for Greater London and each London Borough, April 2003

	Male			Female			All Employees		
	10% earned less than	*Median (£)*	*10% earned more than*	*10 % earned less than*	*Median (£)*	*10 % earned more than*	*10% earned less than*	*Median (£)*	*10% earned more than*
Enfield	264.1	459.1	870.0	224.4	381.0	611.9	238.5	431.9	786.2
Greenwich	293.9	483.0	805.1	[1]—	384.9	[1]—	230.3	449.1	773.2
Hackney	[1]—	496.3	[1]—	250.5	426.5	[1]—	299.7	479.6	889.4
Hammersmith and Fulham	348.5	575.8	1350.5	289.5	493.2	860.6	308.6	544.1	1082.4
Haringey	257.5	449.9	704.0	270.1	382.4	681.8	272.3	419.3	689.6
Harrow	282.6	510.4	998.8	249.7	396.4	750.5	261.2	448.6	821.9
Havering	199.3	340.7	724.0	195.2	300.0	576.0	197.0	319.7	621.1
Hillingdon	281.0	534.7	1013.2	202.0	386.9	781.4	237.1	483.4	918.7
Hounslow	294.9	509.1	1172.4	236.8	422.3	729.2	260.0	479.9	994.4
Islington	330.2	672.1	1610.4	289.5	530.2	1032.6	311.9	595.0	1419.0
Kensington and Chelsea	[1]—	516.4	[1]—	237.3	441.5	804.2	250.0	483.1	1058.2
Kingston upon Thames	[1]—	472.1	[1]—	[1]—	411.8	[1]—	234.1	441.5	1006.5
Lambeth	[1]—	500.7	[1]—	286.2	467.4	761.2	269.8	488.5	960.9
Lewisham	299.5	456.7	792.0	[1]—	478.2	[1]—	251.8	465.0	770.7
Merton	[1]—	407.0	[1]—	[1]—	345.5	[1]—	[1]—	384.0	[1]—
Newham	240.0	477.5	809.0	[1]—	340.1	[1]—	229.9	416.8	753.2
Redbridge	[1]—	458.6	[1]—	[1]—	410.3	[1]—	[1]—	427.6	[1]—
Richmond upon Thames	271.5	493.0	943.9	[1]—	422.3	[1]—	258.3	463.4	875.2
Southwark	362.9	653.9	1033.5	299.6	504.1	927.9	337.0	600.1	1009.6
Sutton	287.2	497.0	971.8	242.4	388.7	641.4	276.8	455.9	827.7
Tower Hamlets	318.5	671.8	1695.0	326.7	563.4	1063.3	326.3	623.9	1570.1
Waltham Forest	[1]—	450.9	[1]—	[1]—	391.5	[1]—	202.6	440.9	802.3
Wandsworth	275.6	472.4	1038.0	257.2	448.6	738.4	265.4	460.7	921.3
City of Westminster	287.8	581.6	1549.9	268.4	473.1	898.3	278.2	518.9	1247.6

[1] Data have been suppressed due to confidentiality or quality

Note:

1. The definition of Greater London is the total of all London Boroughs.
2. Information is provided for average gross weekly earnings including overtime and relates full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay period was unaffected by absence.
3. The New Earnings Survey release criteria currently require that any estimate: *(a)* of a mean is based on a sample size of at least 30 and that the associated standard error does not exceed 5 per cent. *(b)* of a quantile such as a percentile, quartile or median, or of a percentage, is based on a sample size of at least 10 and that the sample size is either at least 225 or that the relative standard error is less than 20 per cent.
4. Estimates are produced for those people who work in a borough.

Electorate (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the change in the size of the electorate was in each Lancashire constituency in each year since 1997; and what these figures were as a percentage of the total. [162149]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle, dated 22 March 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your question concerning the change in size of parliamentary electorate for each Lancashire parliamentary constituency since 1997. (162149)

Attached is a table showing the total and percentage change of the number of registered parliamentary electors in each Lancashire constituency over the period 16 February 1996 to 1 December 2003. For completeness the Blackburn and Blackpool South constituencies are also shown. The Office for National Statistics did not publish electoral data for parliamentary constituencies for 2000. A new reference date for electoral registers came into effect on 1 December 2001. Previously the reference date was 16 February. Hence two figures are shown for 2001.

It should be noted that these figures represent the number of registered electors. In many cases, larger decreases may be due to 'cleaning' the registers rather than 'real' drops in the number of electors.

Parliamentary electors on the 1996 to 2003 electoral registers: Lancashire

Constituency	*16 February 1996*	*16 February 1997*	*16 February 1998*	*16 February 1999*	*16 February 2001*	*1 December 2001*	*1 December 2002*	*1 December 2003*
Blackpool North and Fleetwood	75,901	75,681	75,371	75,321	74,756	75,552	75,036	75,304
Burnley	67,538	68,219	68,268	68,396	66,934	67,119	65,803	64,659
Chorley	74,621	75,251	76,047	76,468	77,758	78,526	78,510	79,243
Fylde	70,601	72,026	71,921	72,859	73,717	74,402	74,726	75,518
Hyndburn	67,507	67,395	67,291	67,442	66,936	67,123	66,730	66,780
Lancaster and Wyre	77,746	78,942	78,847	78,983	79,495	80,816	81,253	81,456
Morecambe and Lunesdale	68,632	68,624	68,559	68,228	68,070	68,417	68,756	68,240
Pendle	64,077	63,541	63,464	63,333	63,281	63,674	63,935	64,483
Preston	73,226	73,492	73,444	73,088	72,809	72,032	71,614	72,539
Ribble Valley	72,504	73,524	74,023	74,500	75,033	75,607	76,009	76,646
Rossendale and Darwen	70,524	70,435	70,380	70,704	70,884	71,276	70,966	71,494
South Ribble	72,301	72,510	72,865	73,368	74,283	75,012	75,739	75,745
West Lancashire	73,755	73,892	73,900	74,782	73,538	73,594	73,099	73,458
Blackburn	73,896	73,744	73,829	73,967	73,498	73,985	72,669	72,840
Blackpool South	77,538	76,395	75,732	75,614	74,651	75,086	72,512	73,749

Change in number of parliamentary electors — *Change in number*

Constituency	16 February 1996 to 16 February 1997	16 February 1997 to 16 February 1998	16 February 1998 to 16 February 1999	16 February 1999 to 16 February 2001	16 February 2001 to 1 December 2001	1 December 2001 to 1 December 2002	1 December 2002 to 1 December 2003
Blackpool North and Fleetwood	-220	-310	-50	-565	796	-516	268
Burnley	681	49	128	-1,462	185	-1,316	-1,144
Chorley	630	796	421	1,290	768	-16	733
Fylde	1,425	-105	938	858	685	324	792
Hyndburn	-112	-104	151	-506	187	-393	50
Lancaster and Wyre	1,196	-95	136	512	1,321	437	203
Morecambe and Lunesdale	-8	-65	-331	-158	347	339	-516
Pendle	-536	-77	-131	-52	393	261	548
Preston	266	-48	-356	-279	-111	-418	925
Ribble Valley	1,020	499	477	533	574	402	637
Rossendale and Darwen	-89	-55	324	180	392	-310	528
South Ribble	209	355	503	915	729	727	6
West Lancashire	137	8	882	-1,244	56	-495	359
Blackburn	-152	85	138	-469	487	-1,316	171
Blackpool South	-1,143	-663	-118	-963	435	-2,574	1,237

Percentage change in parliamentary electors — *Percentage change*

Constituency	16 February 1996 to 16 February 1997	16 February 1997 to 16 February 1998	16 February 1998 to 16 February 1999	16 February 1999 to 16 February 2001	16 February 2001 to 1 December 2001	1 December 2001 to 1 December 2002	1 December 2002 to 1 December 2003
Blackpool North and Fleetwood	-0.3	-0.4	-0.1	-0.8	1.1	-0.7	0.4
Burnley	1.0	0.1	0.2	-2.1	0.3	-2.0	-1.7
Chorley	0.8	1.1	0.6	1.7	1.0	0.0	0.9
Fylde	2.0	-0.1	1.3	1.2	0.9	0.4	1.1
Hyndburn	-0.2	-0.2	0.2	-0.8	0.3	-0.6	0.1
Lancaster and Wyre	1.5	-0.1	0.2	0.6	1.7	0.5	0.2
Morecambe and Lunesdale	0.0	-0.1	-0.5	-0.2	0.5	0.5	-0.8
Pendle	-0.8	-0.1	-0.2	-0.1	0.6	0.4	0.9
Preston	0.4	-0.1	-0.5	-0.4	-1.1	-0.6	1.3
Ribble Valley	1.4	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.8
Rossendale and Darwen	-0.1	-0.1	0.5	0.3	0.6	-0.4	0.7
South Ribble	0.3	0.5	0.7	1.2	1.0	1.0	0.0
West Lancashire	0.2	0.0	1.2	-1.7	0.1	-0.7	0.5
Blackburn	-0.2	0.1	0.2	-0.6	0.7	-1.8	0.2
Blackpool South	-1.5	-0.9	-0.2	-1.3	0.6	-3.4	1.7

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Employer Tax Contributions

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effects of harmonising employer support on income tax, National Insurance contributions and VAT. [162226]

Dawn Primarolo: The O'Donnell Review of the Revenue Departments was published on 17 March 2004. The Chancellor accepted the Review recommendations in full.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the *(a)* change and *(b)* percentage change in the number of full-time jobs in Stroud was from 1997 to 31 December 2003; [162738]

(2) how many people were employed in manufacturing jobs in Stroud in each of the last seven years for which figures are available; and what percentage of the total work force this represented. [162739]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Drew, dated 22 March 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions about full time jobs, and manufacturing jobs in Stroud. (162738, 162739)

Please find attached two tables giving the information requested.

Table A shows the number of full-time and part-time jobs in Stroud Parliamentary Constituency in 1997 and 2002, the latest year for which information is available.

Table B shows the number of people employed in manufacturing jobs in the Stroud Parliamentary Constituency, and these numbers as a percentage of the total number of employees, from 1996 to 2002, the latest year for which information is available.

Table A; Full-time and Part-time employees[1] in Stroud Parliamentary Constituency: 1997 and 2002

Number, per cent

	Full Time	Part Time	Total
Number of employees			
1997	23,800	9,900	33,700
2002	23,400	12,000	35,400
Change from 1997 to 2002			
Absolute	-400	2,100	1,700
Percentage	-1.3%	20.6%	5.1%

[1] Employee jobs only, not self-employed jobs

Source:
1997, Annual Employment Survey; 2002, Annual Business Inquiry (ABI)

Table B: Employees[1] in manufacturing in the Stroud Parliamentary Constituency; 1996–2002

	Employees in Manufacturing	*% of all employees*
1996	11,400	33.1
1997	9,200	27.2
1998	10,000	28.2
1999	9,600	26.0
2000	8,800	25.1
2001	6,800	20.1
2002	6,700	18.8

[1] Employee jobs only, not self-employed jobs

Source:

1996–1997, Annual Employment Survey; 1998–2002, Annual Business Inquiry (ABI)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of unemployment was in Stroud in each year since 1997; and what percentage of the workforce this represented. [162740]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. David Drew, dated 22 March 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment in Stroud. I am replying in his absence. (162740)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) following International Labour Organisation definitions. However, the LFS sample size is too small to give reliable estimates of unemployment in the Stroud Parliamentary Constituency.

ONS also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (ISA) for local areas including parliamentary constituencies.

The attached table gives the annual average number of JSA claimants and the proportion of the resident working age population for the Stroud constituency for each year since 1997.

JSA claimants in the Stroud Constituency annual averages

	Total	*Rate*[1]
1997	1,569	2.6
1998	1,239	2.1
1999	1,204	2.0
2000	1,040	1.7
2001	997	1.7
2002	919	1.5
2003	924	1.5

[1] Proportion of resident working age population of Stroud Constituency calculated using the 2001 resident working age population.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females aged (i) 21 to 30, (ii) 31 to 40, (iii) 41 to 50 and (iv) 51 to 60 years in Greater London have been unemployed for (A) less than one month, (B) less than three months, (C) less than six months, (D) six to 12 months and (E) over 12 months; [162360]

(2) how many people aged *(a)* 21 to 30, *(b)* 31 to 40, *(c)* 41 to 50 and *(d)* 51 to 60 years are unemployed. [162361

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply

Letter from Colin Mowl to Simon Hughes, dated 22 March 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Questions about unemployment by age group and duration. I am replying in his absence. (162360, 162361)

The attached table shows unemployment estimates from the Labour Force Survey by gender, age and duration in London and in the UK, for the three month period ending November 2003, the most recent period for which information for these categories is available. The data are not seasonally adjusted.

As with any sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to sampling variability.

Persons aged 21–60: duration[1] of unemployment by age

3 months ending November 2003 (not seasonally adjusted) *Thousands*

	UK	*Greater London*			
Age group	*All durations*	*All durations*	*Less than 3 months*	*3 months but less than 6 months*	*6 months but less than 12 months*	*Over 12 months*
Total 21–60	1,042	205	76	43	35	50
21–30	366	77	37	16	12	12
31–40	290	56	16	15	10	15
41–50	215	44	14	*	*	14
51–60	172	28	10	*	*	10
Men						
Total 21–60	606	115	36	23	23	33
21–30	227	46	23	*	*	*
31–40	157	31	*	*	*	*
41–50	118	22	*	*	*	*
51–60	105	16	*	*	*	*
Women						
Total 21–60	436	90	40	20	13	17
21–30	139	31	15	*	*	*
31–40	132	25	*	*	*	*
41–50	97	22	10	*	*	*
51–60	67	12	*	*	*	*

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey[1] Duration of unemployment is defined as the length of time for which a person has been seeking work or the length of time since he or she left their most recent job (whichever is the shorter).

* Sample size too small for reliable estimate. The shortest period available is less than three months.

EU Taxation

Bob Spink: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total level of tax raised was per head of population for each current EU country for the last year for which figures are available, taking into account all sources of taxation and National Insurance and equivalent revenue. [162870]

Dawn Primarolo: The OECD publishes figures for "Tax revenue in US dollars per capita" for each of its member countries, in its annual Revenue Statistics publication. The latest available figures are for 2001 (OECD Revenue Statistics 1965–2002, October 2003 edition, p.90, Table 34). A copy of this publication is available in the Library of the House.

Euro

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps his Department is taking to continue to evaluate its five economic tests for entry to the euro; and what plans he has to publish findings on a regular basis. [162836]

Ruth Kelly: As the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in his Budget speech, "while the Government does not propose an assessment be initiated at the time of this Budget, the Treasury will again review the situation at Budget time next year and report to the House."

Housing Market

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he intends to take to encourage more first time home buyers into the market. [162468]

Ruth Kelly: The Government announced in the Budget statement its intention to implement a programme of change, as recommended by the final report of the Barker Review "Delivering Stability: Securing our Future Housing Needs" published on 17 March 2004, in order to meet the key objectives of stability and improved housing market affordability.

Inland Revenue

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what efforts are being made to *(a)* enhance the services provided by the Inland Revenue and *(b)* facilitate its closer working with other government departments. [162225]

Dawn Primarolo: In July 2003 the Chancellor announced a major review of the Inland Revenue, HM Customs and Excise and the Treasury, led by Gus O'Donnell, which looked at these issues in detail. The O'Donnell Review delivered its conclusions on 17 March 2004 with recommendations to enhance customer service by integrating the work of the Revenue and Customs into a single, new department.

Pet Passports

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what level of VAT is chargeable on *(a)* passports, *(b)* pet passports and *(c)* passports for horses. [161660]

John Healey *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* British Citizens' passports are issued under statute by the Passport Office. Public bodies are not engaged in business activities when they undertake their statutory duties, rendering these public services free from VAT.

Customs and Excise understand that certificates under the Pet Travel Scheme are issued by veterinary surgeons in the course of vaccinating the animal in question. Veterinary treatment is subject to 17.5 per cent. VAT.

If passports for horses are issued commercially by non-public bodies, they will also be subject to 17.5 per cent. VAT.

Financial Services (VAT)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the types of financial transaction that are subject to VAT. [162452]

John Healey: In general, financial services are exempt from VAT. Group 5 of Schedule 9 to the VAT Act 1994 sets out in detail which supplies of financial services are exempt from VAT.

National Asset Register

Mr. Heath: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on how many occasions the National Asset Register has been published since November 1997. [162865]

Ruth Kelly: The National Asset Register has been published on one occasion since November 1997, in July 2001.

Orphans Fund

Alan Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with the Financial Services Industry on the orphans funds held in respect of unclaimed matured policies. [163168]

Ruth Kelly: Ministers and officials regularly meet representatives from the financial services industry and discuss a wide range of issues.

Pensions

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average effect would be on an individual pensioner of adopting the harmonised index of consumer prices as a means of calculating inflation in respect of pensions in each year until 2007. [161374]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not currently available.

The effect on pensioners of adopting the harmonised index of consumer prices as a means of calculating inflation in respect of pensions in each year from April 2004 until 2007 would differ depending on the circumstances of each pensioner.

However, we have no plans to change the basis on which we uprate state pensions.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many pensioners have been affected by the changes to the way inflation is calculated since the adoption of the harmonised index of consumer prices. [161375]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

The harmonised index of consumer prices is not used to uprate social security benefits, and there is no requirement to use it to uprate occupational or personal pensions.

Personal Debt

Jim Dowd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the current level of debt outstanding on *(a)* credit cards and *(b)* home loans and mortgages in the UK; and what the comparable figures were in each of the past five years. [159725]

Ruth Kelly: This data can be found within table A5 of the Bank of England's 'Monetary and Financial Statistics' publication, available from the Bank of England's website: www.bankofengland.co.uk.

Pre-owned Assets Tax

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he received from tax practitioners during the consultation period on the proposed tax on pre-owned assets. [161237]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government has received over 100 responses from tax practitioners. Following consultation proposals to tackle tax avoidance using trusts were set out in Budget 2004 (paragraphs 5.87 to 5.90).

Procurement (Outsourcing)

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make a statement on his Department's procurement policy with regard to offshore IT and call centre outsourcing; whether his Department is outsourcing IT and call centres jobs to offshore companies; to which countries his Department has outsourced these jobs; how much his Department has spent on this outsourcing in each of the last two years; and how much has been budgeted for this purpose for the next two years. [147586]

Ruth Kelly: The Chancellor of the Exchequer's Departments base their procurement decisions on obtaining goods and services that represent the best value for money and are in accordance with their public policy remits, within European legislation and the Government's UK procurement rules. These departments do not currently have outsourced IT or call centre contracts with offshore companies, with the exception of limited technical support provided under very strict security arrangements as part of the Inland Revenue's Self Assessment system. This arrangement will end in July 2004.

Residential Property Purchase

Hywel Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimates have been made of the cost of implementing the tax relief proposals on purchasing residential property through *(a)* SIPPS and *(b)* SAPPS in terms of tax forgone for each financial year until 2010; [161364]

(2) what estimates have been made of the number of people taking up proposals announced in the Pre Budget Report to purchase residential property through *(a)* SIPPS and *(b)* SAPPS. [161365]

Ruth Kelly: The majority of pension savers—over 14 million—are members of schemes currently free to invest in residential property. The new rules will provide a level playing field by allowing some specialised pension funds (SIPPS and SAPPS), held by around 200,000 people, to invest in property for the first time. However for the vast majority of these people investing in property will have little or no attraction because all rental income must go into the pension fund and the property must be sold before the pension can be drawn. Neither do the proposed changes present a 40 per cent. tax break, as some have suggested, as any use of the property for personal use will incur a tax charge.

Self-Assessment

Bob Russell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many penalty notices were issued by the Inland Revenue to taxpayers for alleged late submission or non-submission of their 2003 self-assessment tax returns by the 31 January 2003 deadline in circumstances where they had been returned by this date; and if he will make a statement. [162324]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue does not currently hold figures of the number of Late Filing Penalty Notices issued for self assessment returns for 2002–03 which might have been issued in these circumstances.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will make a statement on the implementation by the Inland Revenue of the scheme whereby taxpayers who no longer need to submit a self-assessment return are informed of this; [147642]

(2) what percentage of taxpayers on low incomes have been removed from the self-assessment system since July 2002; and if he will make a statement; [147643]

(3) if he will make a statement on the simplification of the self-assessment tax return. [147644]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 5.102 of Budget 2004 (HC 301). In addition, the Inland Revenue estimates that up to one million people will be taken out of self-assessment altogether over the coming year. Letters will be sent to them automatically explaining that they will no longer be issued with returns.

Population Statistics

Mr. Forth: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* births, *(b)* deaths, *(c)* marriages and *(d)* divorces there were in each year since 1997. [162935]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from John Pullinger to Mr. Eric Forth, dated 22 March 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your question concerning the numbers of births, deaths, marriages and divorces for each year since 1997. I am replying in his absence.(162935)

Attached is a table providing the information requested.

	Births	Deaths	Marriages	Numbers divorces
1997	643,095	555,281	272,536	146,689
1998	635,901	555,015	267,303	145,214
1999	621,872	556,118	263,515	144,556
2000	604,441	535,664	267,961	141,135
2001	594,634	530,373	249,227	143,818
2002	596,122	533,527	254,397	147,735

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Tax Credits

Peter Bradley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families in The Wrekin are in receipt of *(a)* working tax credit and *(b)* child tax credit; and what the average change in income has been as a result. [162771]

Dawn Primarolo: For the numbers in receipt of child tax credit (CTC) and working tax credit (WTC), I refer my hon. Friend to my answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Burton (Mrs Dean) on 15 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 98W.

It is not possible to estimate the average change in income from the introduction of CTC and WTC for families in The Wrekin. An estimated 3,500 in-work families there were receiving more than the family element of CTC at January 2004, compared with 2,100 receiving Working Families' and Disabled Person's Tax Credits at November 2002; and there was an increase of £180 per year in the child element of CTC from April announced in the November 2003 Pre Budget Report. Out-of-work families with children have also benefited from the increases to the child premia in Income Support and income-based Jobseeker's Allowance from April 2003.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how much money has been overpaid to tax credit recipients in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the United Kingdom in (i) 2003 and (ii) 2004 to date; [161887]

(2) how many people in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the United Kingdom were overpaid disabled person's tax credit before its replacement by working tax credit; [161898]

(3) how many people in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the United Kingdom have been overpaid working tax credit; [161899]

(4) how many people in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the United Kingdom receive working tax credit. [161897]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of families with overpayments in 2003–04 cannot be established until awards for that year are finalised.

On overpayments of the Disabled Person's Tax Credit, I refer my hon. Friend to my answer to the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. O'Brien) on 12 November 2003 *Official Report*, column 394W.

The number of families in the United Kingdom and in each region receiving *(a)* child tax credit and *(b)* working tax credit appears in "Child and Working Tax Credit. Quarterly Statistics". The number of families in each local authority and constituency receiving child or working tax credit appears in "Child and Working Tax Credit. Geographical Analyses"; the estimates are based on a sample of cases and are subject to sampling uncertainty. Both publications appear on the Inland Revenue website, at: www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many awards of child tax credit have been determined to have been wrongly calculated; and of those how many were *(a)* too high and *(b)* too low; [161384]

(2) how many awards of child tax credit have been determined to have been wrongly calculated in *(a)* the North West and *(b)* Lancashire; and of those how many were (i) too high and (ii) too low. [162150]

Dawn Primarolo: Tax credits awards are made on the basis of information captured from claim forms or from claims made online (at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/taxcredits). Awards are then adjusted if a change in circumstances or income is reported. They may also be adjusted if any of the information on which the award was based is incorrect. But it is not possible to distinguish between cases where families' circumstances or incomes have changed and those where the original information provided was incorrect or was handled incorrectly.

Working Tax Credit

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many fraudulent claims have been made for the childcare element of the working tax credit in each year since 2002. [163145]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Northavon (Mr. Webb) on 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1003–04W.

Winter Deaths (Liverpool)

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have died in the winter months in each of the council wards of Liverpool in each of the last 10 years. [162565]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Louise Ellman, dated 22 March 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many people have died in the winter months in each of the council wards of Liverpool over each of the last 10 years. (162565)

Figures are presented for the winter months (December to March) in each year from 1993–94 to 2001–02 in the attached table. The latest year for which data are available is 2002. Numbers of deaths occurring in each winter before 1993 are not readily available at ward level and could only be produced at disproportionate cost.

Number of deaths in winter months[1] in each year from 1993–94 to 2001–02 by electoral ward[2] in Liverpool[3]

Electoral ward	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*1995–96*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Abercromby	52	57	59	69	44	52	38	59	46
Aigburth	128	119	130	135	87	136	112	97	104
Allerton	76	75	84	91	68	77	75	60	73
Anfield	99	73	94	101	78	85	74	86	73
Arundel	55	72	69	56	52	86	52	64	76
Breckfield	64	78	53	71	65	54	65	55	63
Broadgreen	81	69	83	90	86	107	108	100	88
Childwall	49	52	64	57	52	68	45	42	55
Church	79	65	72	69	56	73	60	75	78
Clubmoor	70	83	67	79	74	78	64	71	51
County	68	83	64	78	45	69	56	48	57
Croxteth	81	93	85	95	86	75	86	69	73
Dingle	68	64	53	51	46	63	62	49	52
Dovecot	44	47	51	61	60	44	45	63	56
Everton	37	33	37	40	34	39	28	36	24
Fazakerley	65	76	75	66	54	61	72	65	61
Gillmoss	88	69	83	82	83	76	77	100	66
Granby	48	53	59	60	47	64	54	53	33
Grassendale	71	72	85	73	64	72	76	58	76
Kensington	76	65	82	65	48	65	42	67	41
Melrose	61	76	72	67	74	79	71	75	70
Netherley	39	27	33	37	38	45	30	23	26
Old Swan	76	59	72	62	59	71	44	58	64
Picton	56	46	55	41	42	59	62	39	46
Pirrie	51	61	62	45	44	66	52	65	45
St. Mary's	57	63	72	64	53	72	64	51	36
Smithdown	40	42	60	59	42	65	55	41	36
Speke	49	39	58	60	60	59	48	40	52
Tuebrook	52	64	56	57	52	59	49	57	54
Valley	45	57	54	44	45	57	54	43	29
Vauxhall	45	40	55	43	47	46	57	51	43
Warbreck	68	55	65	71	69	69	75	54	56
Woolton	75	83	66	76	59	64	50	66	51

[1] Figures shown are numbers of deaths occurring between December of one year and March of the following year.
[2] Boundaries as at May 2003.
[3] Usual residents of Liverpool metropolitan district.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 23 March 2004

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the initial achievements of *(a)* the Provisional Reconstruction Team in Mazar-e-Sharif and *(b)* the other provisional reconstruction teams. [162966]

Mr. Ingram: In its first eight months the United Kingdom-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Mazar-e Sharif has made good progress against all its objectives. The achievements of other PRTs is a matter for their own Lead Nations but, collectively, they all contribute towards the wider goal of restoring a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) where and on what date *(a)* Rhadi Nama, *(b)* Ahmed Jabber Karrem, *(c)* Nadhem Abdulla, *(d)* Abd Al Jalba Mouse Ali, *(e)* Hazma Abdul Hussein Al-Askary, *(f)* Waed Jabber Raheem and *(g)* Jasim Yassim Jabbar Al-Shuirillway died; and what the cause of death was in each case; [154352]

(2) where and on what date *(a)* Hussan Said Shaba Al-Bata, *(b)* Said Shabram, *(c)* Waleed Fiaz Mejban, *(d)* Bala Nasheem Mohammed, *(e)* Hassan Abbad Saied, *(f)* Ather Karen Al-Mowafetaia, *(g)* Ali Salaam Ayi Mohammed and *(h)* Dyab Rehman Nasser died; and what the cause of death was in each case. [154357]

Mr. Ingram: The deaths occurred within the United Kingdom Area of Operations, though it is not the purpose of the SIB inquiry to determine the cause of death.

Name	*Date of death*
Rhadi Nama	8 May 2003
Ahmed Jabber Kareem	8 May 2003
Nadhem Abdullah	11 May 2003
Abd Al Jubba Mousa Ali	17 May 2003
Hazma Abdul Hussein Al-Askery	18 May 2003
Waed Jabber Raheem	26 May 2003
Jasim Yassim Jabber Al-Shimillwy	15 June 2003
Hussan Said Shaba Al-Bata	24 October 2003
Said Shabram	24 May 2003
Waleed Fiaz Mezban	2 September 2003
Baha Nasheem Mohammed	15 September 2003
Hassan Abbad Said	2 August 2003
Ather Karen Al-Mowafakia	29 April 2003
Ali Salaam Aziz Mohammed	3 May 2003
Dyab Rahman Nasser	5 May 2003

Chris Rowlands

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the discharge of Chris Rowlands from the Army. [162402]

Mr. Caplin: In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, I am unable to make public any personal data relating to Chris Rowlands unless the hon. Member has his explicit consent.

Service Communications

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many departmental personnel are involved in communications activities for the *(a)* Naval Service, *(b)* Army and *(c)* Royal Air Force. [162960]

Mr. Caplin: Within the Ministry of Defence headquarters' corporate communications organisation there are a number of staff employed primarily on the communications activities of the three single Services. As at 22 March 2004 the number of such personnel (including support staff and photographers) was:

	Number
(a) Royal Navy	[1]19
(b) Army	11
(c) Royal Air Force	13

[1] This includes a team of four Naval photographers who undertake a number of joint service tasks.

Kosovo

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met his European Union counterparts to discuss matters relating to the security situation in *(a)* Kosovo and *(b)* Serbia-Montenegro. [163223]

Mr. Hoon: I regularly meet my European Union counterparts to discuss defence matters, including those relating to the Balkans. In particular, I attended the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council on 17–18 November 2003, at which security issues in the Balkans were discussed.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from the Government of Serbia-Montenegro regarding Prime Minister Kostunica's proposal for the deployment of Serbian forces to Kosovo. [163224]

Mr. Hoon: I discussed recent events in Kosovo with the Serbia and Montenegro Defence Minister, Boris Tadic. The issue of deploying Serbian troops to Kosovo was not raised.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the extent to which the borders between *(a)* Kosovo and Albania and *(b)* Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are adequately secured; and who controls them. [163225]

Mr. Hoon: Responsibility for border control points in Kosovo is held by the Kosovo Police Service under the authority of the UN Interim Administration Mission In Kosovo (UNMIK). Responsibility for the territorial integrity of Kosovo, including adjacent to the border with Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of

Macedonia (FYROM), rests with KFOR. On the Macedonian side of the border, the responsibility for border crossing points rests with by the FYROM Border Police and for the rest of the border with the First Army Brigade. On the Albanian side of the Kosovo—Albanian border, the Albanian Police have responsibility for border control.

We assess that Kosovo's borders with both Albania and FYROM are adequately secured.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the security situation in the Kosovo towns of *(a)* Mitrovica, *(b)* Orahovac and *(c)* Pristina. [163226]

Mr. Hoon: The security situation in Kosovo, including the towns of Mitrovica, Orahovac and Pristina, is calm following the violent events of last week. NATO, including KFOR forces on the ground, continues to monitor the situation.

Leslie John Douglas

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the outcome was of the investigation into the death of Mr. Leslie John Douglas; when a Board of Inquiry was convened; what its recommendations were; and what further action has been taken. [162259]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Military Police Special Investigation, despite extensive witness interviews and forensic examination, was inconclusive.

A Board of Inquiry (BOI) into Cpl Douglas's death was convened in November 2001. It made the following recommendations on range safety:

- that reminders of key Range Planning and Safety Regulations should be issued periodically to the Chain of Command;
- that Guidance on safe bayonet fitting drills should be reviewed;
- that measures be taken to reinforce the need for completion of all aspects of Stage 4 Transition to Field Firing training, prior to commencing Stage 5 Field Firing.

The following actions have been taken:

- periodic reminders of key Range Planning and Safety Regulations are now issued to the chain of command;
- guidance on safe bayonet fitting was reviewed and amended;
- all training authorities are now reminded periodically of the need to ensure proper progression of training.

Medical Reservists

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many medical reservists there were in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003; and if he will make a statement. [158621]

Mr. Caplin: The following table provides information on the number of medical reservists as at 1 April 1997 and 1 April 2003. Figures for 1997 are not available for the Royal Navy Reserves.

Service	*1997*	*2003*
Territorial Army	4,440	3,680
Royal Navy Reserves	—	156
RauxAF	144	138

Sean Benton

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recommendations were made by the Board of Inquiry into the death of Sean Benton concerning security instructions and orders governing armed guard duties at Deepcut barracks; and what action has subsequently been taken on the implementation of each of these recommendations. [162267]

Mr. Ingram: During its investigation the Board of Inquiry (BOI) highlighted a number of concerns, largely relating to security orders and procedures within the Guardroom. Direction was given for the following actions to be taken, and these were implemented by the end of August 1995:

- review all security and guard procedures to ensure that they are relevant and in accordance with the current regulations and instructions;
- review all instructions within the Guardroom, and in particular instructions given to the guard and other duty personnel;
- issue clear orders relating to the issue of weapons and ammunition and the safeguarding of such weapons while they are in an individuals charge;
- review procedures for the posting of relief guards.

In its concluding report, the BOI also made the following recommendations, all of which have been implemented:

- adequate instructions should exist for all sentry posts;
- reliefs should be posted by the Guard Commander, Guard 2IC or Regimental Police Duty staff;
- a standardized Guard Commanders Order to the guard format should be adopted;
- guards should be clearly told that they are not to handover their weapons or ammunition unless specifically ordered to do so by a member of the Regimental Police Staff, Guard Commander or Guard 2IC;
- orders should be clearly displayed in the Guardroom;
- the Guard and Guard Reserve should be paraded as two separate contingents;
- guards should be rotated between posts during their period of duty thereby safeguarding against complacency.

Territorial Army

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what help is given to Territorial Army soldiers who have lost their job owing to service with the military in the last five years; and how many TA personnel have been affected. [161869]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence provides detailed advice to reservists on their legal right to reclaim their civilian employment in the UK and how to seek reinstatement, in line with the Reserve Forces (Safeguard of Employment) Act 1985. Each reservist receives a copy of JSP 532 "Guidance for reservists returning to civilian employment following a period of mobilised service". The Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers (SaBRE) campaign team provides a help line and a website which gives additional information and advice. Also, each Reserve Forces and Cadet Association (RFCA) has an Employer Support Executive who is able to offer advice and assistance to reservists who are experiencing problems returning to their civilian employment. We are also introducing Unit Employer Support Officers to boost further our capability in this area.

In addition, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence announced on 11 December 2003 in the Defence White Paper, we will be examining the effectiveness of the 1985 Act and the other measures that go with it.

There is no requirement for reservists to provide the information requested to the Department. There is, therefore, no comprehensive record of the numbers of reservists who may have lost their civilian jobs. However, indications are that civilian employers have been very supportive of reservists and, of over 9,200 reservists called-out to support Operation TELIC, we are aware of only 15 individuals who have brought, or are seeking to bring, cases to Reinstatement Committees under the 1985 Act (as at 17 March 2004). In addition, two applications were made resulting from the mobilisation of reservists for operations in the Balkans.

There is one small TA unit based in Germany, where the 1985 Act does not apply. Special arrangements have therefore been put in place to offer Full Time Reserve Service appointments to 11 reservists called up for Operation TELIC, who have not been able to return to their original employment. This is intended to provide continuity of employment until they are able to start new jobs. We are very concerned to learn that these members of the TA lost their civilian jobs, and plan to raise this matter with the relevant German authorities.

TREASURY

Small Businesses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what changes have been made since 1997 to the tax system to promote enterprise and growth in small businesses; and what assessment he has made of their effectiveness. [163324]

Dawn Primarolo: Changes to taxation since 1997 are set out in the relevant Financial Statement and Budget Reports, which are available in the Library of the House. They include a range of measures to promote investment and productivity, including cuts in corporation tax and income tax rates for the self-employed, improvements to capital allowances for small enterprises, the simplification of the VAT regime, introduction and expansion of the R and D tax credits and support for venture capital.

Biofuels

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to complete his consultation on biofuels; whom he plans to consult; and how the consultation will be conducted. [163043]

John Healey: The Department for Transport will shortly consult on the Government's draft biofuels directive implementation strategy. This will include options on complementary regulatory measures, including the option of a biofuels obligation for the transport sector.

Furthermore, the Chancellor announced in this year's Budget that the Government will be discussing with stakeholders two separate issues concerning biofuels: *(a)* The implications of input-based taxation on biofuels, and *(b)* the application of enhanced capital allowances to support investment into the most environmentally beneficial biofuels processing plants.

Direct Payment

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer from the Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions of 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 584W, how many *(a)* Post Office card accounts and *(b)* bank or building society accounts have (i) been requested for and (ii) are receiving payments of child benefit, broken down by region. [162736]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 22 March 2004]*: Key figures on the progress of conversion of child benefit customers to direct payment are available in the House of Commons Library, updated every four weeks. They include details of requests for the Post Office card account. With regard to actual payments, as at 16 March 2004 a total of 5,750,105 child benefit customers were being paid into a bank or building society and 233,220 into a Post Office card account. There are a further 127,453 customers who have provided bank or building society details and 91,647 who have provided Post Office account details and they will be paid into their accounts when their current order book expires.

It is not possible to break down the numbers by region.

Community Benefit Society Asset Locks

Mr. Todd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will publish a consultation paper on the introduction of the community benefit society asset locks described in the Co-operatives and Community Benefit Societies Act 2003; and if he will make a statement. [163340]

Ruth Kelly: The Government intends to publish a consultation document on the introduction of the community benefit society asset lock later this year.

Complaints

Rob Marris: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints there were to *(a)* the Inland Revenue, *(b)* HM Customs and Excise and *(c)* district valuers' offices in each of the last three years. [156868]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is published in HM Customs and Excise's and the Inland Revenue's Annual Reports, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

E-business Strategy

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to produce the e-business strategy for *(a)* HM Customs and Excise and *(b)* the Public Record Office. [162811]

John Healey: HM Customs and Excise has had an e-Business Strategy for several years. It has been updated periodically to reflect changes in thinking and the impacts of external initiatives. A summary of current

plans will be published later in the year. Part *(b)* of the question is the responsibility of the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

Energy Saving Allowance

Mrs. May: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what standards for loft and cavity wall insulation will apply for qualification under the Landlord's Energy Saving Allowance. [162956]

John Healey: The standards for loft insulation will be set out in regulations made under powers to be set out in Finance Bill 2004.

Inland Revenue

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will announce the name of the next Chairman of the Inland Revenue. [162709]

Dawn Primarolo: Following Sir Nicholas Monatgu's retirement on 19 March 2004, Miss Ann Chant has assumed the role of Acting Chairman of the Inland Revenue.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor announced in his Budget speech that the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise will be integrated to create a new Department. The advertisement for the post of Chairman of the new Department was posted on the Treasury website on 18 March 2004. An announcement of the successful candidate will be made in due course.

Personal Tax Allowances

Mr. Byers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to the Exchequer would be of allowing a married person to transfer their personal tax allowance to their earning spouse if they have *(a)* a child aged between six months and one year and *(b)* a child aged between one year and two years. [162428]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 23 March 2004]*: The cost to the Exchequer through lower income tax of allowing married persons with children to transfer their full personal allowance to their spouse if he or she has a higher gross income for the two options are listed below.

Cost in 2004–05 per annum

	£ million
Option	
a) married and with at least one child aged between 6 months and one year	160
b) married and with at least one child aged between one year and two years	340

Note:
Figures rounded to the nearest £10 million. They exclude any estimate of behavioural response to the tax change.

The change in revenue for other taxes can only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

Tax Avoidance

Mr. McFall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which companies are known *(a)* to be selling or to have sold versions of the card handling scheme used to reduce VAT bills and *(b)* to be using or to have used the scheme; and how much revenue is involved in each case. [161860]

John Healey: HM Customs and Excise is debarred by statute from disclosing information about the individual affairs of taxpayers. Exemption 15 (Statutory and other restrictions) of the Open Government Code applies. However, Customs are aware of around 78 taxpayers using the card handling scheme, involving around £301 million of VAT revenue. Customs are vigorously tackling these schemes through the courts and have successfully contested a test case in the VAT and Duties Tribunal.

Tax Fraud and Evasion

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the estimated amount of money lost in each of the last five fiscal years to tax fraud and evasion. [162224]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 22 March 2004]*: There is no reliable estimate of the overall "tax gap" for direct taxes. Lord Grabiner in his review of the hidden economy and the OECD's Centre for Tax Policy and Administration have both concluded that it is a concept difficult if not impossible to measure.

Estimates for indirect tax losses can be found in 'Measuring and Tackling Indirect Tax Losses' (December 2003). A copy of this document has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

VAT

Brian Cotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many businesses his Department estimated would be lifted out of the VAT regime at the time of each increase in the annual taxable turnover limit since 1997. [162666]

John Healey: On average, annual increases in the VAT registration threshold keep around 3,000 of the smallest businesses out of the VAT system.

Estimates of the number of businesses kept out by each increase since 1997 are given in the following table:

£000

Date of increase	*New threshold*	*Number of businesses*
December 1997	49,000	200 (part year effect only)
April 1998	50,000	3,000
April 1999	51,000	3,000
April 2000	52,000	3,000
April 2001	54,000	5,000
April 2002	55,000	2,000
April 2003	56,000	2,000
April 2004	58,000	5,000

(Businesses that did not grow in real terms will be reflected in more than one year so individual estimates should not be summed)

Brian Cotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many small businesses have taken up the flat rate VAT scheme in each year since its introduction. [162667]

John Healey: The VAT flat rate scheme for small businesses was introduced on 25 April 2002. There were approximately 8,000 businesses using the scheme at 31 March 2003, and around 15,000 in December 2003.

Mr. Moss: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will refund to charitable museums VAT which has been incurred on *(a)* purchases made possible by grant monies from the National Lottery and *(b)* other purchases. [162352]

John Healey: Admission of persons to premises for a charge is a business activity for VAT purposes, so a museum that charges for admissions will normally be able to recover the VAT incurred on its purchases, building maintenance and other costs. Museums that charge admission fees that are exempt from VAT are not able to recover VAT incurred on their purchases.

Under normal VAT rules, VAT incurred on goods and services relating to 'non-business' activities cannot be recovered. Free admission of persons to premises is a non-business activity for VAT purposes, therefore museums which do not charge for admission, cannot recover the VAT they incur on related purchases, irrespective of the source of the funding used to make these purchases.

However, in September 2001, the Government introduced a VAT refund scheme which allows the main national museums and galleries which do not charge admission to recover VAT they incur on their purchases. This scheme was designed to remove an obstacle VAT was creating to the delivery of the Government's 1997 manifesto commitment that there should be free access to the main national museums and galleries.

The Chancellor has also announced in this year's Budget that the commitment to achieve free access has been an outstanding success and that, building on this success and in light of the Goodison Review, the Government will now consider the issue of extending the free access commitment for the main national museums and galleries, and the VAT refund scheme that has helped to deliver it, to university museums in the context of the forthcoming Spending Review.

Working Tax Credit

Mr. Denham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families are receiving the child care element of working tax credit; what the cost has been to date; and what proportion of families with children of eligible age this represents. [161527]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 17 March 2004]:* The number of families benefiting from the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit, and their average help with childcare costs through this element, appear in Table 4.4 of each issue of "Child and Working Tax Credits. Quarterly Statistics."

Each issue of this publication appears on the Inland Revenue web site, at www.inlandrevenue.aov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm.

The childcare element is available to single parents working for at least 16 hours per week, and to couples both working for at least 16 hours per week or where one works for at least 16 hours per week and the other is incapacitated, or a hospital inpatient or is in prison. The element covers eligible childcare costs incurred on children up to 1 September 2004 following their 15th birthday (16th if disabled).

Child benefit records indicate that at December 2003 there were 6.4 million families with at least one child whose 15th birthday was due to fall after 1 September 2004.

SCOTLAND

Asbestos

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the buildings occupied by his staff which require *(a)* remedial work on and *(b)* removal of asbestos; what that work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys. [159649]

Mrs. McGuire: No buildings occupied by the Scotland Office currently require work related to the removal of asbestos. The costs of any work required in future will be met from within the administration costs for the Office.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of buildings occupied by his staff have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to the implementation of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159658]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office has been complying with the relevant provisions of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 for buildings occupied by its staff. Final work will be undertaken to check for the presence of asbestos prior to the introduction of Regulation 4 in May 2004.

Common Fisheries Policy

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with the First Minister on the effects of reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. [162303]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend and the First Minister discuss a wide range of matters.

Departmental Communications

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the total expenditure on communications for the Department has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communications Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers.(ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158199]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office spent £180,582 on communications for the period up to the end of February 2004. This expenditure is attributable to press office staff (who are also members the Government Information and Communications Service) and special advisers. Details of the costs of special advisers are given on an annual basis. Information for the financial year 2003–04 will be published in due course.

Mineral Water Industry

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what estimate his Department has made of the number of jobs in Scotland dependent upon the mineral water industry. [162989]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office has made no such estimation of job numbers dependent upon the mineral water industry.

The most recent Scottish Executive figures illustrate that the wider bottled water and soft drinks industry directly employed 1,933 people in Scotland in 2002.

Scottish Executive

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the annual change in the block grant paid to the Scottish Executive was in each year since 1999; what percentage of the change for each year resulted from the application of the Barnett Formula; and what percentage of the change for each year resulted from other monies added to or subtracted from the block grant. [149632]

Mrs. McGuire: Information on the block grant to the Scottish Executive is set out in the main and supplementary estimates of the Scotland Office and in Scotland Office departmental reports. Changes to the Scotland DEL are determined in accordance with the Statement of Funding Policy, published by HM Treasury.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Capital Modernisation Fund (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Capital Modernisation Fund computer-learning centres have been established in Crosby. [160446]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: There are three UK online centres in Crosby.

Two of those are Capital Modernisation Fund (CMF) centres and one is a public library. The two CMF Centres "3TC" and Merseyside Third Technology Centre and the public library is Crosby Connect Learning Centre at Crosby Library.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people in Crosby have received a computer to assist in seeking employment or retraining. [160449]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: At present no centrally funded schemes exist which enable people to acquire free or low price recycled computers. In the past such schemes have been trialled but have proved costly to administer to ensure fair distribution of equipment.

Government funding has been focused instead upon establishing the network of UK online centres. People in Crosby who do not have ICT access and wish to use computers are advised to visit their local UK online centre.

Sure Start

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Sure Start children's centres have been set up in deprived neighbourhoods since 2003. [161016]

Margaret Hodge: There are currently 67 children's centres in England, all of which are based in disadvantaged areas. We announced 32 on 23 June 2003, 29 on 24 September 2003 and a further six on 18 February 2004. We are currently considering proposals from local authorities for the wider roll out of this programme, and will announce new locations in the near future as further centres are ready for designation. All children's centres will be based in the 20 per cent. most disadvantaged wards in England, or in pockets of disadvantage outside of these wards.

Education (Stroud)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of teachers in Stroud have received computer training. [162744]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Statistics on teacher training in ICT are not compiled on a constituency basis, but all teachers are expected to be able to use ICT effectively in the classroom. In-service training was largely addressed by the UK-wide National Lottery-funded New Opportunities Fund (NOF) ICT training, which ran between 1999 and 2003, and to which some 96 per cent. of teachers in England signed up.

Training in the effective use of ICT in teaching is also a mandatory part of Teacher Training Institute courses.

Further training opportunities to address teachers' continuing professional development needs (CPD) in embedding ICT in classroom teaching are now being developed across a range of subjects, and teachers are able to buy into this training using Standards Fund monies.

IT Procurement

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action the Department is taking to improve and increase *(a)* school and *(b)* local education authority IT procurement. [161235]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Government is making significant investment in ICT in schools and always looks to ensure schools get the best value for money from this investment. Currently through the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta) we are supporting schools and LEAs by

aggregating procurements through the creation of framework contracts which deliver significant savings in price and considerably reduce the time and effort that would be needed (and duplicated) at local level;

the recent agreement between Becta and Microsoft Ltd in relation to their licensing framework for schools provides significant savings of between 20 per cent. to 37 per cent. for schools in England who choose to license the Microsoft software. The agreement also extends to schools in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland;

accrediting suppliers against strict commercial and technical criteria to provide assurance of quality service at affordable cost;

providing procurement advice to schools and LEAs though the Becta Independent Procurement Advisory Service (IPAS) and online advice and support to schools on the total cost of ownership and the issues to be considered beyond just the cost of infrastructure equipment.

Maintained Schools (Languages)

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils in maintained schools he estimates were studying one or more modern foreign languages at key stage two in each of the last five years. [163133]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: A 2001 study by QCA and the University of Warwick of modern foreign languages in the primary curriculum suggested that one in five primary schools were offering some form of language provision. The Department is currently reviewing this figure, and the number of primary pupils engaged in languages through further research, the findings of which will be available in late spring.

Return-to-work Training (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many women in Crosby have visited an information and communications technology training centre in order to learn skills to return to work. [160387]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Crosby is served by both UK online centres and learndirect provisions.

An estimated 169 women use UK online centres in Crosby each quarter.

This information is calculated from UK online quarterly management information (quarter ending December 2003) which shows that, on average, each UK online centre has 101 users and that 56 per cent. of UK online users are female.

To date, 555 women have enrolled on a learndirect course from the Crosby constituency.

Schools (West Suffolk)

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many schools in the west Suffolk constituency have benefited from the Out of School Hours Learning Programme; [163035]

(2) what financial provisions have been made for those schools who wish to continue the after school activities that have come about from the Out of School Hours Learning Programme once funding from the programme ends. [163036]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Suffolk Local Education Authority has informed my Department that it has distributed £725,186 from the Department's Standards Fund to all schools in Suffolk this year to provide study support opportunities (out of school hours learning) for young people in Suffolk.

Study support includes activities such as sport, the creative arts and cultural activities, as well as after school and breakfast clubs. Suffolk has also received £720,564 from the New Opportunities Fund 'Out of School Hours Learning Programme' of which £219,802 went to schools in West Suffolk. Again, this can be used to provide a range of activities for young people.

School funding plans for next year have been announced, guaranteeing that the standards fund income for all schools will be protected at this year's levels plus inflation proofing at 4 per cent.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Peat

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has *(a)* to re-convene the Peat Working Group and *(b)* to engage the United Kingdom gardening industry in helping the Government to meet its target of 90 per cent. of growing media and soil improvers to be peat free by 2010. [162234]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department held a seminar involving all stakeholders on 30 April 2003 to examine the current and future development and use of environmentally friendly growing media and how this should be taken forward in the light of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan targets. The seminar's conclusions included establishment of a new Forum to replace the Peat Working Group to assist us in taking an informed view on the achievability of the 90 per cent. peat free target during the next review of the UK Biodiversity Action plan targets due in 2005.

Work on the composition of the new Forum and arrangements for the first meeting have regrettably been delayed. We hope to convene the new Forum as soon as resources and priorities allow. In establishing the new Forum we will seek representation from all the stakeholders including the gardening industry.

Animal Welfare

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 3 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 930W, what action she is taking to reduce the usage of veterinary antibiotics. [160996]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government recognises that animals do become ill and need to be treated for both animal welfare and consumer safety reasons. Antimicrobials play an important part in maintaining healthy food-producing and companion animals. However, the Government firmly believes that the use of these products should not replace good farm management and animal husbandry systems.

The Government's aim is to reduce the use of antimicrobials on farm as part of an overall strategy of managing the risk to humans from antimicrobial resistance.

In addition to supporting the EU wide ban on antimicrobial growth promoters from 1 January 2006, key elements of this strategy include the collection and publication of information on the quantities of antimicrobials sold each year for veterinary use in the UK and the promotion of optimal and responsible use of antimicrobials in animal rearing. In this context the Government has worked closely with the Responsible Use of Medicines Alliance (RUMA) in drawing up their Codes of Practice on responsible use of veterinary medicines for cattle, sheep, poultry and pig producers.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 3 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 930W, what recent research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effect on humans of receiving antibiotics through the eating of meat and poultry, with particular reference to hospital superbugs. [160997]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra's research programme into antimicrobials is designed to take forward the issues identified by the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF) in their 1999 Report on Microbial Antibiotic Resistance in Relation to Food Safety. This concluded that further research was required into the extent to which antibiotic use in animals contributes to the overall problem of antimicrobial resistance in humans.

This programme is therefore investigating whether the administration of antibiotics to animals results in the selection of resistant bacteria that may be transferred to humans in food and cause infections that are difficult to treat. It is focused on bacteria found on farms and in slaughterhouses that can cause human disease, such as Salmonella, Escherischia coli and Campylobacter. It does not include isolates found in hospitals and the evidence does not indicate that food is a major source of resistant organisms in hospitals.

This research will be evaluated as part of a full science review of the programme being arranged for late 2004.

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate carries out extensive surveillance for residues of veterinary medicines (including antimicrobials) in meat and other animal products. Over the five years between 1998 and 2002 (the last year for which figures are available) nearly 60,000 red meat and poultry samples were analysed. Antimicrobial residues above the EU's permitted Maximum Residues Levels were detected in less than 0.2 per cent. of these samples.

Badgers/Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will carry out an assessment to determine whether perturbation in badger populations can be eliminated or substantially reduced by improved badger culling programme design and execution. [157933]

Mr. Bradshaw: Research by the Central Science Laboratory and Oxford University suggests that culling operations may cause some spatial and demographic perturbation of badger populations. The amount of perturbation is a factor of the degree of culling, and the number of badgers surviving it. The more or, conversely, the less effective a badger culling programme is, the less the perturbation effect may be. Given the number of replicates that would be required at varying levels of culling efficiency and badger density, it would be difficult to design a study to quantify accurately the effects on the levels of perturbation that different culling programmes would have.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made with the *(a)* recruitment and *(b)* retention of appropriately skilled staff for carrying out badger culling operations. [157943]

Mr. Bradshaw: Full staff complement in the Wildlife Unit (WLU) would have been achieved during December 2003, however due to the announcement on 4 November 2003 to suspend the reactive culling element of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT), three recruited staff were not offered posts.

There are currently 21 occupied field staff posts that are no longer required for delivery of the remaining elements of the RBCT. At present, there is no proposal to make the surplus staff redundant.

The pattern of staff turnover within the WLU is not considered excessive, and retention is not seen as a current issue. The surplus staff as indicated above provides a substantial buffer against possible future loss of expertise.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what natural factors restrain growth in badger populations when *(a)* the size of the population is less than the theoretical carrying capacity of the environment that it occupies and *(b)* there are opportunities for migration; [157953]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1559W, what regulatory mechanisms limit the size of wild badger population. [158416]

Mr. Bradshaw: Badger population growth is constrained by reproductive output, mortality and migration. These factors will influence the population growth rate whether the population is below, at, or above the environmental carrying capacity. There is no reason to suspect that opportunities for migration will ever be absent but migration rates do appear to be generally low in badger populations. Reproductive output is probably limited by the number of reproducing sows per social group and the average litter size per sow. Both of these factors appear to be governed by nutrition. Mortality is also largely governed by nutrition, but is also influenced by stochastic events, such as dry summers. However, since all British badger populations studied reproduce well below their theoretical maximum, reproductive output is considered to be the major limiting factor to population growth.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what powers of entry wildlife officers have in order to gain access to badger setts for the purpose of trapping and destroying badgers. [158015]

Mr. Bradshaw: Participation in the trial is voluntary in all the triplet areas. Defra Wildlife Unit staff have no powers of entry to carry out badger culling and are on land with the consent of land-owners.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which organisation is responsible for issuing licences for the killing of badgers under section 10 of the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. [158342]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department's National Wildlife Management Team is responsible for issuing these licences.

Contact details:

Wildlife Administration Unit
Defra
Burghill Road
Westbury-on-Trym
BRISTOL
BS106NJ

Telephone 0845 6014523 (local rate)

Fax 0845 6013438 (local rate)

E-mail enquiries.southwest@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to what extent badger colonies approaching or exceeding the natural carrying capacity of their immediate environment rely on artificial food sources to sustain population levels. [158357]

Mr. Bradshaw: Research conducted by the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) suggests that badgers are more likely to seek artificial food sources, such as cattle feed, on dry nights when earthworm availability is limited. Potentially, artificial food sources could decrease badger mortality during protracted periods of natural food shortage, thereby bolstering local numbers. Currently, however, there is no information on the extent to which the value of such foods may differ with respect to population size and carrying capacity. The importance of cattle feed in badger diets forms part of an ongoing Defra funded research project being carried out by CSL, which is due to report in December 2005.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the population *(a)* density and *(b)* incidence of TB in badgers is in (i) Scotland and (ii) England. [158358]

Mr. Bradshaw: Population density varies widely on a regional scale throughout Scotland and England. In Scotland, large tracts of the uplands have no badgers, with local pockets of relatively high density. Overall, population density in Scotland is in the region of 0.2 badgers per km2. In England population density also varies in different areas, from very high (up to 30 badgers per km2) to low, with an average in the region of 1 to 2 badgers per km2.

The current incidence of TB in the national badger population is not known.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether perturbation in badger populations results in *(a)* increased contact between disparate social groups and *(b)* greater incidence of fighting between rival males, with more opportunities for infection spread through wounds. [158360]

Mr. Bradshaw: Disruption of social groups is likely to lead to changes in the contact rates of badgers from different social groups. However, there is currently insufficient data to quantify such effects accurately. No analyses have been carried out on the extent of aggressive confrontations, and the potential for disease transmission via bite wounding, in relation to population perturbation.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the effect is of low body weight arising from food shortage on the disease resistance of individual badgers. [158366]

Mr. Bradshaw: Poor nutrition has been linked to disease susceptibility in several studies of animal and human health. Currently, however, no data are available to link low body weight to disease resistance in badgers.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the role is of suppurating wounds in TB affected badgers in the spread of *M. bovis* to *(a)* other badgers and *(b)* cattle. [158367]

Mr. Bradshaw: *M. bovis* has been isolated from bite wounds on badgers, although whether these resulted from transmission by biting or haematogenous spread following another portal of entry is still unclear. Infected bite wounds could be sources of infection for other badgers, particularly where mutual grooming occurs. Suppurating wounds are also a potential source of environmental contamination with infectious bacilli. This could pose a risk of infection to cattle if deposited on pasture, stored feed or in troughs.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what is meant by the term 'super-excretor' in respect of a badger infected by TB; and whether badgers so described exhibit atypical behavioural characteristics. [158375]

Mr. Bradshaw: Badgers excreting *M. bovis* are potential sources of infection for other badgers, and cattle. The term 'super-excretor' is used for research purposes to identify a sub-group of infected badgers from which *M. bovis* has been isolated from several different clinical samples. These animals are thought to be in an advanced stage of disease progression, and survival analyses have shown that they exhibit a higher rate of mortality than uninfected animals. Research conducted by the Central Science Laboratory has identified behavioural differences between badgers excreting *M. bovis* and uninfected animals. Badgers excreting *M. bovis* had larger home ranges and were more likely to visit farm buildings.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the typical cost of obtaining market authorisation for an animal vaccine is; how long the authorisation process takes; whether the typical cost can be used as a basis for estimating the cost of a market authorisation for any animal TB vaccine developed; and whether it is possible to use vaccines without their undergoing the full market authorisation process. [158001]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under European legislation marketing authorisations for veterinary medicinal products, including vaccines, may only be granted where scientific assessment of data supplied by the applicant demonstrates that the product meets statutory criteria of safety, quality and efficacy. The fee currently charged by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) for processing an application for a UK marketing authorisation is between £1,480 and £21,210, depending on the type of application and the complexity of the assessment required. The fee for a novel veterinary vaccine, such as a TB vaccine, is likely to be at the upper end of this range.

European legislation requires applications for new marketing authorisations for veterinary medicinal products to be processed within 210 "clock" days of submission of a valid application. "Clock days" are calendar days, including weekends and holidays but excluding any period where further information is requested and awaited from the applicant. The time taken for applicants to respond to requests for further information is dependent upon a number of factors including the nature of the information requested and the priorities of the applicant. During such periods the authorisation procedure is frozen. Therefore, typically, the total time taken to determine an application for a marketing authorisation for a novel veterinary vaccine, such as a TB vaccine, could be approximately two years.

European legislation permits provisional marketing authorisations to be granted, in exceptional, objective and verifiable circumstances, without the need for a full data dossier. Such authorisations are only granted where safety has been established and are subject to specific conditions, such as the carrying out of further studies for efficacy.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the regulatory processes which affect the size of wild deer populations are; and whether the Government intervene in the natural regulatory processes. [158002]

Mr. Bradshaw: Deer are affected by the same 'regulatory processes' as other wildlife. The availability of key resources, particularly food, is the single most important determinant of population size. Management by man and incidental mortality (especially road traffic accidents) also play a role in influencing deer numbers.

In England, the Government 'intervenes' in a number of different ways, but most importantly through setting the legal parameters for deer management. Forest Enterprise, the government agency responsible for managing the nation's forest estate, intervenes more directly and is actively involved in managing deer within its forests.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cats infected with bovine TB have been reported to her Department in each of the last five years. [158007]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information requested is given in the following table.

	Suspect TB cases in cats reported to Defra	*Number of suspect cases confirmed by isolation of M. bovis from clinical or pathological specimens at Veterinary Laboratories Agency*
2003	8	2
2002	9	2
2001	0	0
2000	2	2
1999	Not known	Not known

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether cattle exhibit the same level of discrimination in respect of choice of food contaminated by badger faeces when feeding from cattle troughs as when grazing on grassland. [158008]

Mr. Bradshaw: Work carried out by Bristol University found that cattle generally avoided pasture contaminated with badger faeces, but that high stocking densities resulted in more cattle feeding at contaminated sites. It is likely that cattle would exhibit a similar level of discrimination against food contaminated with faeces, whatever the means of provision, but may not be afforded this choice if food is limited. This may be the case where cattle set-stocking densities are too high at pasture, where cattle are grazed on grassland recently cut for silage or where contaminated feed is present within a feed trough.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in how many of the Krebs proactive and reactive trial areas there were areas of land within the trial areas, or abutting on them, where wildlife officers were refused entry for the purpose of trapping or destroying badgers. [158016]

Mr. Bradshaw: All 20 proactive and reactive trial areas have within them areas of land where permission to cull has been withheld by the land-owner.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the optimum area in which badger control measures should be taken relative to a TB infected farm. [158018]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Report of the Independent Scientific Review Group chaired by Sir John Krebs recommended the removal of all badgers from all social groups with territories including the breakdown farm (or reactor land). The Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISG) advised on the practical implementation of this, and the reactive treatment of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial was implemented according to a Standard Operating Procedure ratified by the ISG.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether TB in badgers is a significant population regulatory factor. [158020]

Mr. Bradshaw: Bovine TB does not appear to be a significant population regulatory factor in badgers in Britain. Research by the Central Science Laboratory identified that of 207 marked badgers found dead in the Woodchester Park study area between 1978 and 1993, 65 per cent. had died from road traffic accidents, 9 per cent. had been killed, 7 per cent. died from starvation, 11 per cent. died from unknown causes and 9 per cent. died from TB. Since badger populations in Britain breed at significantly below their maximum potential, even the proportion of total mortality attributable to road traffic accidents is unlikely to affect population regulation.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether material contaminated with the M.bovis bacilli deposited on silage by badgers and used for the feeding of cattle is considered to present a significant risk of infection to cattle. [158022]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is little evidence to support the hypothesis that silage contaminated with material containing "Mycobacterium bovis" derived from badgers represents a significant risk of infection to cattle. However, "M. bovis" may survive outside the body for varying lengths of time and, so, there is a theoretical risk from this source.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether the current and proposed TB testing regimes in low risk areas are sufficient to ensure that new foci of infection do not develop which would pose a risk of spread to wildlife. [158370]

Mr. Bradshaw: The proposed testing regime meets or exceeds the requirements of the EC Directive 64/432/EEC. But neither this nor the current regime can guarantee that new foci of infection do not occur.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her best estimate is of the incidence of TB in cattle arising from *(a)* cattle-to-cattle spread and *(b)* the spread from a wildlife reservoir. [158378]

Mr. Bradshaw: Current, continuing, research is designed to inform the Government on the relative importance of cattle and badgers as vectors of the disease. At present it is not possible to give a valid estimate for either.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the latest advice issued by her Department is concerning cattle biosecurity measures. [159067]

Mr. Bradshaw: In 2001, Defra published "Golden Rules for a Healthy Herd". This guidance sets out the most important rules for minimising the risk of introducing diseases onto farms. It applies to those purchasing and selling cattle.

In 2002, Defra developed a concise biosecurity guidance poster with a number of livestock farming and veterinary organisations. "Better Biosecurity Provides . . . " was sent to every livestock farm in England and is available on the Defra website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/biosecurity/farmguidance/biosecleaf.pdf

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the likely incidence of TB in the badger population in 2007. [159072]

Mr. Bradshaw: The current incidence of TB in the national badger population is not known, so it is not possible to predict the incidence for future years.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how long after exposure to an infective dose of M. bovis bacilli a bovine animal becomes infectious; and what the typical duration of infectivity is. [159074]

Mr. Bradshaw: Published figures for the time from exposure to being infectious include 87 to 226 days after natural exposure in a United Kingdom study and up to seven years in an Australian study. The typical duration of infectivity is not known.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what reasons have been adduced for the relatively low density of badgers in the eastern counties of England. [159075]

Mr. Bradshaw: The relatively low densities of badgers in eastern counties (excluding the south-east) compared to western counties is thought in part to reflect the east-west divide in the rural landscape. The predominantly pastoral west is thought to provide more preferred habitat for badgers than the arable east of the country.

However, this does not entirely explain the differences. In East Anglia badger densities are lower than would be expected based on landscape alone[1], and it is concluded that in these areas the low densities are the consequence of past 'persecution' of badgers, from which badgers have yet to recover[2].

[1] Heydon, M.J., Reynolds, J.C. and Short, M.J. (2000) Variation in abundance of foxes (Vulpes vulpes) between three contrasting regions of Rural Britain, in relation to landscape and other variables. "Journal of Zoology", 251, 253–264.

[2] Reason, P., Harris, S. and Cresswell, P. (1993) Estimating the impact of past persecution and habitat changes on the numbers of badgers Meles meles in Britain. Mammal Review. 23: 1–15.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to what extent different *(a)* age groups and *(b)* sexes of badgers are more likely to be trapped than others. [159077]

Mr. Bradshaw: Research carried out by Oxford University and the Department's Central Science Laboratories suggested that the likelihood of badger capture using cage traps did not vary between the sexes but did vary significantly between adults and cubs. However, the direction of this age effect was not consistent between different study areas suggesting that other local factors were also important.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether there have been any significant differences between the pattern of TB lesions observed in badgers subject to post-mortem examination pre-2000 and those examined during and after 2000. [159078]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information about lesion distribution in badgers since the start of the randomised badger culling trial has not been available to Defra officials for analysis. This information is held on behalf of the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the ideal geological conditions are for a badger habitat; and whether there are conditions which *(a)* prevent and *(b)* deter colonisation by badgers. [159083]

Mr. Bradshaw: Badgers can exist in a wide variety of habitat types. They typically locate setts in sandy or chalky, well drained soil that is easy to excavate. Setts are also usually located on hillsides or otherwise sloping ground where drainage is good, and excavated soil is easy to clear from the sett entrance. However, badgers are also known to dig setts into flat ground where such optimal conditions are not available. Badgers are much less likely to dig setts in clay soil types that are less well drained and less easily dug. Given that setts are an important resource for badgers, it has been argued that the availability of suitable sett sites has a direct effect on the density of setts, and hence social group density.

For further information, see:

T. J. Roper (1993) Badger setts as a limiting resource. In: "The badger" (ed. T. J. Hayden) Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

E. G. Neal and C. L. Cheeseman (1996) "Badgers".

Clements, E. D., Neal, E. G. and Yalden, D. W. (1988) The national badger sett survey. "Mammal Review", 18, 1–9.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research has been conducted by her Department to determine whether badgers infected with *M. bovis* are capable of transmitting infection to cattle. [159108]

Mr. Bradshaw: Apart from the study by the Central Science Laboratory at Woodchester Park in which infected badgers have been identified as excreting *M. bovis* in faeces, urine, tracheal aspirates and suppurating skin lesions, there has been a study in which naturally infected badgers were housed with uninfected calves. Several of the calves developed sensitivity to the tuberculin skin test and were found to have TB lesions when subject to post mortem examination.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many carcasses of red deer have been examined by the State Veterinary Service in the last 10 years at the Baronsdown deer sanctuary; and how many were found to be infected with bovine tuberculosis. [160170]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra does not provide disease statistics on individual premises, but does so on a parish basis.

Since 1998 there have been nine confirmed cases of "M. bovis" in red deer in the parish of Dulverton, which includes Baronsdown.

Defra does not have data on the number of carcases of red deer examined by the State Veterinary Service in Dulverton prior to 1998.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of *(a)* whether deer populations on the Baronsdown deer sanctuary are sustainable and *(b)* whether the deer are infected with bovine tuberculosis. [160171]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information is as follows:

(a) The management of deer at the Baronsdown deer sanctuary should be addressed to the League Against Cruel Sports, as the management of wildlife on private land is primarily a matter for the relevant landowner and not the Government.

(b) Defra does not provide disease statistics on individual holdings. The deer on the Baronsdown sanctuary are wild and free to move.

The parish of Dulverton includes Baronsdown and other holdings. Since 1998 there have been nine confirmed cases of "M. bovis" in red deer in the parish of Dulverton.

Cattle Movements

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the purpose is of the six-day rule for auction marts; what representations she has received on lifting the six-day rule of auction marts; if she will lift the six-day rule of auction marts; and if she will make a statement. [162028]

Mr. Bradshaw: Livestock moving to auction markets does not trigger a six day standstill on arrival at a market. But in order to balance the significant disease risk that results from animals from different sources mixing at a market, animals are only permitted to move to a market if the farm from which they originate is not under a standstill (20 days for pigs or six days for other species).

This rule is waived where the market is a dedicated slaughter market. In this case the livestock must go from the market direct to slaughter. The disease risk is accordingly less than if the stock were dispersed to other farms.

The standstill that applies to farm premises is based on a scientific Cost Benefit Analysis of the disease risks associated with various standstill lengths. I do not propose to amend the standstill regime, which represents the best available balance between minimising disease risk and the needs of the farming community to trade livestock.

I have received no representations from livestock farmers or market operators on lifting the requirement for livestock to observe a standstill before they move to auction markets.

Cetacean By-catch

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what funding her Department has *(a)* allocated and *(b)* spent on scientific research into preventing cetacean strandings in UK waters in each of the past five years for which records are available. [155948]

Mr. Bradshaw: Figures for scientific research allocated and spent by Defra, in each of the past five (financial) years, on mitigating cetacean bycatch are;

2003–04—£173,232
2002–03—£220,582
2001–02—£171,912
2000–01—£155,308
1999–2000—£93,510

Computer Production (Environmental Effects)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on discussions between her Department and the Department of Trade and Industry on *(a)* effects on the environment of future computer production and *(b)* who should pay the costs of environmental effects. [160815]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* Defra work closely with the DTI, who lead on the implementation of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), and the Restriction of the use of Certain Hazardous Substances in electrical and electronic equipment (RoHS) Directives. These Directives are producer responsibility Directives, and aim to reduce the environmental impact of all electronic equipment, including computers. The environmental impact is reduced by restricting the use of hazardous substances during manufacture; and through reprocessing WEEE, so that materials can be returned to the economic cycle and avoid being landfilled. The WEEE Directive also aims to assign financial responsibility, for the collection, treatment and recycling of WEEE, to producers and business users, when a computer reaches its end of its life.

In addition, both Defra and DTI are currently negotiating two other Directives that will have a positive effect on the environmental impact of computers. Batteries are a significant component of laptop computers, and the proposed Batteries Directive will make producers of batteries responsible for their collection and recycling.

Similarly the proposed Eco design for Energy using Products (EuP) Directive will ensure that producers take responsibility for the whole life cycle of their products, from the initial design stage, right through to end of life and disposal. Defra, via the Market Transformation Programme, has also been working with the DTI, among others, to seek to reduce the energy consumption of IT equipment in use. Current measures include the EU Energy Star Regulation and the Government Quick wins initiative which specifies minimum standards for government procurement of IT equipment.

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) when she will reply to the letter to her from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, dated 5 February 2004 with regard to Ms C.Holden; [161802]

(2) when she will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 5 February, with regard to Ms C.Holden. [163300]

Alun Michael: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State responded on 16 March.

Cotswolds Canals

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the re-opening of the Cotswolds canals; and what discussions she has had with the Heritage Lottery Board with regard to the bid that has been submitted. [162830]

Alun Michael: The Government wishes to encourage restoration projects to expand the canal network, which has clear economic, environmental and social benefits. It is for the Heritage Lottery Board to assess and decide on the funding application to support the restoration of the Cotswold Canals but we look forward to the outcome of the Board's major grant meeting in July.

Deer Sanctuaries

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will introduce an active management plan on deer sanctuaries in co-operation with neighbouring land managers. [160174]

Mr. Bradshaw: The management of wildlife on privately owned land is primarily the responsibility of the relevant landowner, and it has not been the policy of this or previous governments to become actively involved unless the landowner is the recipient of funds from the public purse or if the landowner is in breach of his / her legal obligations.

As the larger deer species range widely we encourage neighbouring landowners to co-operate in managing deer if agricultural damage or other problems arise. Advice on deer and guidance on preparing management plans are available from the Deer Initiative (Tel: 0870 774 3677; e-mail: info@thedeerinitiative.co.uk; www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk).

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her current targets are for domestic energy efficiency improvements. [161007]

Mr. Morley: The Energy White Paper issued in February 2003 made clear that more than half the emissions reductions in the UK Climate Change Programme—around 10 million tonnes of carbon per year by 2010—are expected to come from energy efficiency, with household energy efficiency accounting for around half of these. Beyond 2010, the Government believes that energy efficiency can contribute around half the additional 15–25 million tonnes of carbon we are likely to need by 2020, of which 4–6 million tonnes might be accounted for by the household sector.

An aim for energy efficiency in residential accommodation in England, as required by the Sustainable Energy Act 2003, is likely to be set out in the Government's Energy Efficiency Implementation Plan, to be published after Easter.

Farming

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on farm income levels for farmers in Crosby in the past five years. [160394]

Alun Michael: Due to the small number of farms in Crosby, there is no robust data available on farm incomes for farmers in Crosby over the last five years.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the 20 largest payments made under the *(a)* Arable Area Payments Scheme, *(b)* Beef Special Premium Scheme, *(c)* Suckler Cow Premium Scheme, *(d)* Sheep Annual Premium Scheme, *(e)* Hill Farm Allowance Scheme, *(f)* Slaughter Premium Scheme, *(g)* Integrated Administration and Control System, *(h)* Dairy Premium Scheme, *(i)* Dairy Additional Payments Scheme and *(j)* Extensification Payment Scheme were in the most recent EU budget year for which figures are available. [156141]

Alun Michael: The figures in the following table represent the total of the 20 largest payments made under the listed schemes. These are based on the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) Year which runs from 16 October 2002 to 15 October 2003.

Scheme	*Value (£)*
Arable Area Payments	10,067,954.47
Beef Special Premium	819,631.12
Suckler Cow Premium	1,721,515.19
Sheep Annual Premium	1,438,796.95
Hill Farming Allowance	310,191.42
Slaughter Premium	600,375.50
Extensification Payment	915,768.43

Figures have not been provided for *(g)* Integrated Administration and Control System as this is an umbrella scheme which encompasses the individual schemes listed in the table; *(h)* Dairy Premium Scheme and *(i)* Dairy Additional Payments Scheme which are new schemes being introduced with effect from 2004.

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is bound by commercial confidentiality in its dealings with its customers, whether sole traders or farmers or corporations, breach of which by disclosing information relating to the affairs of individual traders or farmers or corporations would expose the RPA to the liability of legal proceedings in tort.

In relation to individual farmers or traders, information which is of a personal nature, such as individual payments to such persons, is personal data which is protected from voluntary disclosure under the Data Protection Act 1998. While the RPA can release global figures relating to payments, which do not identify individual persons, including corporations, it is unable to release individual figures without incurring the liabilities under the two principles.pa

Fisheries

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the maximum amounts of fish allowed to be caught daily in Welsh waters were in each year since 1997. [160910]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are no specific limits as to the amount of fish that can be taken in Welsh waters. For certain stocks total allowable catches are fixed annually by the EU but in relation to sea areas as defined by the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas. These areas do not correspond with Welsh or other territorial waters.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many fisheries have been closed to protect stocks since 1997. [160874]

Mr. Bradshaw: Since 1997 restrictions have been introduced in the following areas to close fisheries to protect stocks:

Fisheries	
Irish Sea	Area closed each spring since 2000, through EU measures, to targeted fishing for cod in Spring as part of Irish Sea Cod Recovery Plan to protect spawning cod
North Sea	Area closed, through EU measures, to targeted fishing for cod in Spring 2001 as part of the North Sea Cod Recovery Plan to protect spawning cod
Nursery Areas for bass	3 further areas in estuaries and around the coast of England and Wales closed, by the UK Government, to bass fishing to protect juveniles
Clyde estuary	Area closed, by the Scottish Executive, each spring since 2001 to demersal trawls to protect spawning cod.

There are also longer standing fisheries closures such as the Mackerel, Pout and Herring boxes.

Legislation has also been introduced to restrict fishing in a number of areas for the protection of the wider marine environment:

Fisheries	
Darwin Mounds	A ban on bottom trawling introduced by the EU in 2003 at the UK's request to protect cold water coral
Lundy Island	A total fishing ban introduced by Devon Sea Fisheries Committee in 2003 to protect the Lundy Marine Nature Reserve
Sandeel Box	Area (the Wee Bankie) off the North-east coast of the UK where industrial fishing has been banned since 2000 by the EU to protect the food species of a range of predators including sea-birds
The Wash	A ban introduced by UK Government in 1998 on dredging for razor shells, trough shells and carpet shells to protect the Wash and North Norfolk candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC)
Fal and Helford Estuaries	A ban introduced by UK Government in 2003 on dredging for scallops to protect the Fal and Helford cSAC

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the tonnage of fish caught in UK territorial waters by fishing vessels registered in each EU member country was during the latest period for which figures are available. [161369]

Mr. Bradshaw: The arrangements for access to the coastal waters of the United Kingdom between 6 and 12 nautical miles are set out in Article 17 and Annex I of Council Regulation (EC) No. 2371/2002 of 20 December 2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the Common Fisheries Policy. Data on catches and landings made by UK vessels and vessels from other Member States is collected in relation to sea areas as defined by the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas: this data includes, but does not separately identify, the quantities of fish taken from the United Kingdom's coastal waters.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the *(a)* operations and *(b)* efficiency of claimants' associations in respect of loss of fisheries in the fishing industry. [159678]

Mr. Bradshaw: This is not a matter I can comment on. It is up to individual associations to negotiate compensation for the possible loss of fisheries.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice and assistance on *(a)* financial and *(b)* legal issues is available to fishermen who wish to explore compensation opportunities for loss of fisheries. [159681]

Mr. Bradshaw: As one of the statutory regulators of marine works under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985, the Department takes account, among other things, the extent to which any proposed project is likely to affect the legitimate interests of other uses of the sea.

However, the Department does not offer advice or assistance on legal and financial issues with regard to seeking compensation from a licence applicant for any loss of fisheries.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many fishing vessels were licensed in each year since 1997. [160873]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information is not readily available for 1997 but details on the number of vessels licensed by the UK Fisheries Departments since 1998 are given in the following table.

Vessel overall length	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Under 10 metres	5,041	5,053	4,925	4,810	4,805	4,699	4,738
Over 10 metres	2,320	2,149	2,034	1,958	1,912	1,691	1,570
Total	7,361	7,202	6,959	6,768	6,717	6,390	6,308

Foot and Mouth Disease

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department withheld any evidence on the origins of the 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak from Dr. Iain Anderson's inquiry. [161521]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* A full report on the origins of the outbreak was submitted to Iain Anderson's inquiry and is published alongside the inquiry report. That was based on wide-ranging evidence including rigorous epidemiological investigation.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether evidence prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's vet Mr. J. Dring in respect of her inspection of Burnside Farm, Northumberland during early February 2001 was presented to Dr. Iain Anderson to assist him with his inquiry into the cause of the foot and mouth disease outbreak. [161522]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* Mr. Dring contributed to the epidemiological investigation underpinning the Department's official submission to the Inquiry on the origins of the outbreak. His inspection of Burnside Farm on 24 January 2001 was also discussed at a meeting in Newcastle with Iain Anderson on 4 March 2002. Both the submission and the report of the meeting were published alongside Iain Anderson's final report of his Inquiry.

Gamma Interferon Test

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of why the gamma interferon test achieves sensitivity of 60 to 65 per cent. in UK trials; [158363]

(2) what assessment she has made of the difference in gamma interferon test sensitivity in UK trials compared with test sensitivity in Australia. [159120]

Mr. Bradshaw: The gamma-interferon pilot currently running in Wales, Staffordshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire, and the work carried out in Northern Ireland, have not been designed to assess the sensitivity of the gamma-interferon test. No comparisons can therefore be drawn with test sensitivity in trials run in other countries.

GM Crops

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she was informed that cattle feeding studies involving Chardon LL fodder maize had been requested by the *(a)* Advisory Committee on Releases into the Environment and *(b)* Advisory Committee on Animal Feedstuffs. [160574]

Mr. Morley: Neither the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment nor the Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs (ACAF) has requested cattle feeding studies involving Chardon LL fodder maize. ACAF has advised, on the basis of the data already submitted, that it is content that the T25 maize grain and its products pose no more risk as animal feed than non-GM maize varieties. The results of recent feeding trials to cattle have not yet been published or peer reviewed but I am not aware they have come to any different conclusion.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether she has given consent for harvested Chardon LL fodder maize from farm-scale evaluation sites to be taken-off site and used in cattle-feeding studies at the Reading University Centre for Dairy Research; [160575]

(2) whether the Government's policy on harvested material from GM crops involved in the farm-scale evaluation programme being fed to animals or otherwise entering the food chain has changed; [160576]

(3) what steps she has taken to ensure that no milk or meat from the cattle involved in the Chardon LL feeding studies at Reading University has entered the food chain. [160577]

Mr. Morley: The GM maize used in the farm scale evaluations has Europe wide marketing consent for use in animal feed so no consent was required to use the harvested crop in the cattle feeding study carried out at the University of Reading.

The agreement made with the Supply Chain Initiative on Modified Agricultural Crops (SCIMAC) in November 1999 requires that none of the produce from GM crop plantings in the UK will be used in a way which is of direct commercial benefit to the consent-holders during the farm scale evaluation period. The policy on use of harvested material, as outlined in the SCIMAC agreement, has not changed.

Although there is no legal requirement to withhold the milk or meat from the food chain and there is no discernable difference between meat and milk from animals fed GM feed and those not, the protocol for the Reading University study required that the milk from the dairy cows did not enter the food chain during the period of the study.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she was first informed that cattle feeding studies involving Chardon LL fodder maize had been requested by *(a)* the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment and *(b)* the Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs. [160633]

Mr. Morley: Neither the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment nor the Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs (ACAF) has requested cattle feeding studies involving Chardon LL fodder maize. ACAF has advised, on the basis of the data already submitted, that it is content that the T25 maize grain and its products pose no more risk as animal feed than non-GM maize varieties. The results of recent feeding trials to cattle have not yet been published or peer reviewed but I am not aware they have come to any different conclusion.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make public the locations proposed in applications to grow Chardon LL T25 maize. [161362]

Mr. Morley: We will consider whether the locations of commercial GM crop sites should be made public when we consult stakeholders in due course on the co-existence issue.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will establish who paid for the research on the GM farm scale evaluations undertaken by members of the Scientific Steering Committee and published by Nature on 5 March. [161520]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* The research published in the Nature paper "Ban on triazine herbicides likely to reduce but not negate relative benefits of GMHT maize cropping" (Nature AOP; published online 4 March 2004) was undertaken by the authors at the expense of their respective institutes (listed on the paper). Defra and Scottish Executive paid for the data collected in the farm-scale evaluations, on which the paper was based, but did not commission this work. None of the authors were members of the Scientific Steering Committee. The research was peer reviewed by scientists not involved in the FSEs.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her statement of 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1381–84, on GM policy, (1) what new evidence applicants for the recently approved GM fodder maize need to provide before the renewal of the contract to grow this crop before October 2006; [161523]

(2) what new evidence is required by consent holders prior to the renewal of their consents in October 2006 that is not required now. [161614]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* Existing consents for genetically modified organisms issued under Part C of Directive 90/220, including that for GM maize T25 issued in 1998, continue in force until October 2006. At that time new consents must be obtained or the product withdrawn. Directive 2001/18/EC and EC Food and Feed Regulations 1829/2003 set out the required information and assessments to be provided by the applicants. Information provided to support the original 90/220 application must be updated to account for technical progress and relevant new information. The applicants must also provide an environmental risk assessment as set out in Annex II of the new directive. In the case of GM crops this must include an assessment of the GMO and its use which have the potential to cause adverse effects as compared with those presented by the non-modified crop and its use under corresponding situations, such as weed management with herbicides. Applicants must also provide a post market monitoring plan and information on methods for detection and identification to facilitate post marketing control and inspection.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the preliminary results of research carried out by Professor Terje Traavik of the Norwegian Institute of Gene Ecology on the health implications of GM maize crops for those living close to the crops. [161724]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* We understand that at a recent meeting in Malaysia, Professor Terje Traavik reported that farm workers from the island of Mindanao in the Phillipines had an immune reaction to genetically modified Bt maize (event MON 810). No scientific evidence has yet been published by the Norwegian research team on the health implications of Bt maize crops for those living close to such crops and Professor Traavik is quoted as stressing that more tests are needed before any definite conclusion can be drawn.

Bt maize is not grown in the UK. If Professor Traavik's work is published we will consider whether there are any implications for the UK.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her oral statement of 9 March, *Official Report*, columns 1381 to 1396 on GM crops, if she will assess the work of Aaron de Grassi at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, on GM crops in Africa. [161727]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* We are aware of the work published by Aaron de Grassi evaluating various projects involving the development of GM crops for cultivation in Africa. While we have no plans to assess his work, we are always interested in quality research on GM crops and their application.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish her Department's assessment of the section of the GM national consultation concerned with the practicality of co-existence between GM and non-GM crops. [161758]

Mr. Morley: A detailed response to the findings of the GM Dialogue is available at www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/debate/pdf/gmdialogue-response.pdf. We believe there is no reason in principle why GM and non-GM crops should not co-exist, and our recent policy statement confirmed how we intend to move forward on this subject. We will consult stakeholders on co-existence measures based on the 0.9 per cent. EU labelling threshold for GM presence, and on whether a lower threshold might apply for organic production.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will conduct investigations into the feasibility of GM free zones being established in areas in Wales and Scotland bordering England where English farmers cultivating border farms decide to grow GM crops. [161781]

Mr. Morley: Under EU law it is not possible to establish compulsory or statutory GM-free zones, but we have said that we will provide guidance to farmers who may want to establish voluntary zones in which GM crops are not cultivated. English farmers on the border with Wales and Scotland will have the right to grow an approved GM crop subject to the co-existence measures that are put in place, so the scope for voluntary GM-free zones in areas bordering England will have to be considered in that light. We will be liaising closely with the Devolved Administrations on these issues.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a further statement on *(a)* her plans to introduce legislation in respect of GM crop liability and co-existence and *(b)* the timescale for those plans. [162373]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* We intend to have co-existence measures that have statutory backing in place before any commercial cultivation of GM crops, which we do not expect before spring 2005 at the earliest. We plan to consult stakeholders on this shortly, and on options for compensating non-GM farmers for financial losses that they may incur.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her statement of 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1381–84, on GM policy, who will determine the conditions required to achieve the first condition of not resulting in adverse effects on the environment; and when those conditions will be made public. [161615]

Mr. Morley: On 9 March officials wrote to the French Competent Authority, which issued the relevant consents on behalf of the EU member states, and proposed that restrictions be placed on the existing marketing consents for cultivation of maize containing transformation events T25 and BT176. In accordance with Directive 2001/18 the French Competent Authority will now forward an assessment report to the Commission who will forward it to all the other member states. A collective EU decision will be made on the proposal for amending the conditions of the consent.

A copy of the letter to the French Competent Authority will be published on the Defra website and placed on the public register.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her statement of 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1381–84, on GM policy, when decisions will be made on thresholds for GM contamination of organic farms; and who will make the decision. [161616]

Mr. Morley: We will take decisions in liaison with the Devolved Administrations, after we have consulted stakeholders. We will initiate a consultation exercise as soon as possible.

Illegal Meat Imports

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the progress of the Government's action plan on illegal imports of meat, other animal products, plants and plant products. [161406]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 15 March 2004]*: Progress against the Government's Action Plan on illegal imports in the financial year 2002–03 is reported in the Annual Review of Controls on Imports of Animal Products. Copies have been placed in the House Libraries.

The 2003–04 Action Plan is appended to the Review, and we are working with HM Customs and other responsible parties to implement it. HM Customs took over responsibility for anti-smuggling controls at the border on 11 April this year. Progress will be reported in the next Annual Review, to be published after the end of this financial year.

Lamb and Beef Farming (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much money her Department makes available to promote Lancashire *(a)* lamb and *(b)* beef farming. [158583]

Alun Michael: Lancashire beef and lamb producers are eligible to receive subsidies under the Common Agricultural Policy Beef and Sheep meat Regimes (there are currently no schemes specifically for lambs). The table below shows the amount under these schemes that was paid to farmers in Lancashire in the 2003 European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund Year (15 October 2002 to 16 October 2003).

Any additional direct subsidy intervention by UK Government in favour of specific geographical regions is prohibited by State Aids and competition rules.

£000

	Payments
Sheep[1]	6,494,223.40
Beef[2]	18,110,610.02
Total	24,604,833.42

[1] Sheep Annual Premium Scheme.
[2] Beef Farming includes the following schemes:
Beef Special Premium
Extensification Payment
Slaughter Premium
Suckler Cow Premium
Over Thirty Month Compensation Payments

Nappies

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Department of Health regarding the *(a)* environmental and *(b)* financial effects of using cotton nappies in maternity wards. [159096]

Mr. Morley: I attended a meeting with the Minister for Health, and the Women's Environmental Network (WEN) in July last year to discuss the issues surrounding the use of re-usable nappies in hospitals.

WEN will be publishing a report on 29 March considering the issues raised at the meeting, a copy of which will be sent to me.

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the Strategy Unit's report regarding the impact of initiatives to displace disposable nappy use on waste minimisation; and if she will make a statement. [160983]

Mr. Morley: The aim of the measure on re-usable nappies outlined in the Strategy Unit report 'Waste Not Want Not' was to achieve an average diversion of 225kg a year per participating household.

The Waste and Resources Action Programme, which is taking forward this work on the Government's behalf, is aiming to have an additional 155,000 households using re-usable nappies by the end of fiscal year 2006.

This is an ambitious target. If achieved it would create a reduction in household waste of 35,000 tonnes.

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what initiatives her Department is taking to reduce landfill waste by encouraging alternatives to disposable nappies. [161167]

Mr. Morley: Following publication of the Strategy Unit Report the Government accepted the recommendation that the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) should take forward a waste minimisation initiative, which includes work on supporting re-usable nappies.

The details of the programme are still being worked up but include support for new businesses and the provision of information to parents.

Nuclear Materials

Dr. Jack Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many tonnes of material the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority proposes to transfer from Dounreay to Drigg; what the composition of the material is; what method of transport will be used; and if she will make a statement. [162254]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The application by UKAEA to transfer LLW to Drigg has been made to SEPA, whose responsibility it is to determine the application under the provisions of the Radioactive Substances Act 1993, subject to the powers of Scottish Ministers. As such it is a matter for SEPA and the Scottish Ministers.

I understand that SEPA has published the application and associated documentation on its website for public consultation, which closed on 23 February 2004. These can be viewed at: http://www.sepa.org.uk/consultation/ukaea/index.htm.

Given that Drigg is operated as a United Kingdom facility and that its existing authorisation is sufficient to cover the proposed transfer, it is not necessary for the Secretary of State to be involved in determining UKAEA's current application.

Pesticides

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of people whose health has been affected in the last five years by being exposed in the open air to pesticides; and if she will make a statement. [161102]

Alun Michael: Complaints alleging ill health effects resulting from exposure to pesticides are routinely investigated by Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Inspectors. HSE's Pesticides Incidents Appraisal Panel (PIAP) considers the reports of investigations, with the aim of providing an overview of ill health attributed to pesticide exposure so that new issues and trends can be identified, and to inform the pesticides approval process.

HSE publishes an annual Pesticide Incidents Report, which contains information on investigated incidents and enforcement action, looks at statistical trends over a ten year period, and summarises the work of PIAP. Copies of the latest Report for 2002/3 have been placed in the House Library.

Plant Diversity

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her plans to implement the proposals contained in Plant Diversity Challenge: the UK's response to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. [161041]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 12 March 2004]:* There is already a great deal of action going on which will help us to progress many of these proposals. These include activities under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and the specific action plans for the conservation of 45 habitats and 391 species, many of which are plants. In addition, a range of biodiversity and sustainable development measures will assist us in progressing the Plant Conservation Strategy, including our extensive network of protected sites, the development of agri-environment schemes in the UK, and the Millennium Seed Bank at Kew.

Printer Cartridges

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether ink cartridges will be included under the guidelines of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive; and if she will make a statement. [161783]

Mr. Morley: The controls of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive apply to whole electrical and electronic products, and not consumables such as inkjet printer cartridges.

Sewer Baiting

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will issue guidance to local authorities on courses of action available to them where sewerage undertakers are unwilling to be involved in joint work on sewer baiting. [161666]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 17 March 2004]:* A joint protocol, published in 1999 by the Local Government Association and Water UK, contained arrangements for closer working relationships between water companies and local authorities in respect of rodent infestations in sewers.

I am not aware of any representations from Local Authorities needing further guidance.

Sugar Regime

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has made to the European *(a)* Agriculture and *(b)* Trade Commissioner on reform of the Common Agricultural Policy sugar regime; and if she will make a statement. [160559]

Alun Michael: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has made clear in the Agriculture Council and in other contacts with the Commission that she is anxious for early progress on reforming a regime that has remained substantially unaltered for over 35 years, despite the fundamental changes achieved elsewhere in the Common Agricultural Policy. The Government are still considering which of the specific options put forward by the Commission represents the best way ahead, taking account of the range of interests involved, including the implications for developing countries.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which of the options for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy

sugar regime set out in the European Commission's working paper, Reforming the European Union's Sugar Policy, is preferred by her Department. [160560]

Alun Michael: The Government have already made clear that it shares the European Commission's view that Option 1, involving extension of the present regime beyond 2006, is not sustainable. We have also said that we are looking for a market based approach in line with the major CAP reforms achieved in June 2003 across most other sectors.

Sugar reform raises a complex set of issues, including implications for developing countries, and we are still considering the best way ahead, taking account of the views received in our consultation exercise which closed on 16 January and which we are still assessing.

US Ships

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs by when she expects the seasonal weather to be appropriate to allow the return of the four ghost ships from Hartlepool to the United States. [158914]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* Clearly it is difficult to predict when the weather will be appropriate to allow for the possible return of the ships, but it is expected that the weather window could open in May. Before any such journey could be made, the vessels would need to be inspected, surveyed and appropriately certified for seaworthiness.

Wildlife Habitats

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she has on the variables which affect the carrying capacity of a habitat in respect of its ability to support a particular wildlife species. [158005]

Mr. Bradshaw: Competition between individuals within a species (intraspecific competition) limits the maximum number of individuals that can be supported by an environment (the environmental carrying capacity). This is influenced by the quantity of resources that are under competition. These may include food resources, nesting sites and mates.

Further information on this topic may be obtained from any elementary ecology text book, such as Begon, M., Harper, J. L. & Townsend, C. R. (1996) *Ecology*. 3rd Edition. Blackwell Science, Oxford.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Communications

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what the total expenditure on communications for the Office has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others; [158158]

(2) how many staff are employed in the Office to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158172]

Mr. Alexander: Communication is embedded in Government policy development and delivery and not simply an end function of departmental press officers.

Within the Cabinet Office there are two specific units who deal with communications and are largely staffed by GICS members—the Communications Group (CG) and the GICS Centre.

CG provides advice and services on press and media relations, the internet and other electronic communication; internal communication; marketing and publications; and editorial. CG currently employs 41 staff, 7.5 of whom work in the press office supporting five Ministers. CG budget for this year is £3,615,100. This breaks down to £1,736,746 staff, £917,554 running costs and £960,800 departmental communication activity.

The GICS Centre is responsible for cross-departmental and emergency communications and activity including the Government News Network (GNN), and the News Co-ordination Unit (NCC) and the Media Monitoring Unit (MMU). It is also responsible for GICS corporate and HR policy matters. The budget for the GICS centre for 2003–04 was £2.458 million. The GICS Centre currently has 170 staff of whom 130 are part of the GNN, which has offices in London and also regionally across the UK. The GNN operates on a repayment basis charging Departments for the services it provides.

Communications staff across Whitehall on short-term secondment operate the NCC on an ad hoc basis when it is activated. The MMU currently has 15 full time staff. The MMU is self-financing operating on a subscription charge to the Government Departments that it serves.

There is one special adviser appointed to the Minister without Portfolio (MWP). The special adviser does not work as part of the Cabinet Office CG but may in the course of his duties as set out in the Special Adviser's Code of Conduct, advice the MWP on communications issues.

Official Opposition (Officials)

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many officials, and of what grade, are allocated to the Official Opposition; how they were selected; where they are based; and what the total cost is. [161819]

Mr. Alexander: Four civil servants—one HEO equivalent, one EO and two administrative officers—are allocated to the Official Opposition Whips Office in the House of Commons. All were appointed following Cabinet Office recruitment and selection procedures. The total cost in the current financial year will be approximately £128,000.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

National Lottery

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many applications for Lottery money have been made since the introduction of the online facility; and how many of these were made online. [162812]

Estelle Morris: This Department does not collect comprehensive information on the number of applications for Lottery grants made to the distributing bodies. I will write to the hon. Member with details of the number of applications made online once these have been ascertained.

New Opportunities Fund

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money from the New Opportunities Fund was allocated to *(a)* the West Suffolk constituency and *(b)* the county of Suffolk, in each year since its inception. [163033]

Estelle Morris: In each financial year, the New Opportunities Fund allocated to:

West Suffolk constituency

	£
1999–2000	88,848
2000–01	149,362
2001–02	25,703
2002–03	76,398
2003 to current date	326,378
Total	666,689

County of Suffolk

	£
1999–2000	2,921,208
2000–01	1,828,195
2001–02	4,250,369
2002–03	3,271,150
2003 to current date	2,255,738
Total	14,526,660

These numbers are derived from the Department's database of Lottery awards, which is based on information supplied by New Opportunities Fund (and the other distributing bodies).

Police Transfers

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the transfer arrangements for the pensions of officers in the Royal Parks Constabulary when they join the Metropolitan Police will ensure that no officer receives a lower level of *(a)* pension and *(b)* lump sum than they would have received had they remained in the RPC under the current arrangements until retirement age. [160348]

Mr. Caborn: Officers in the Royal Parks Constabulary are covered by the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme; officers in the Metropolitan Police Service are covered by the Police Pension Scheme. While the PCSPS provides a pension and lump sum payment on retirement, the PPS provides a pension at retirement with an option to commute up to a quarter for a lump sum. How much pension and lump sum officers in the PPS receive therefore depends on their own decisions. The Government Actuary's Department has confirmed that the PPS is generally more valuable for members than the PCSPS. Officers in the RPC will have the option of transferring their accrued pension rights from the PCSPS on special terms so that they will have a package of benefits which is overall at least as valuable as that they would have received from the RPC.

Television Signal

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take to improve the television signal in mid-Sussex. [163042]

Estelle Morris *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* Broadcasters, through contracts with transmission operators, are responsible for maintaining the terrestrial television network. The Broadcasters are no longer seeking to improve analogue coverage in the UK as this is expected to be switched off in favour of digital TV.

While much of mid-Sussex already receives digital terrestrial TV, the broadcasters are aware that coverage is not universal and are keen to improve this. Unfortunately, due to International planning constraints this cannot happen before switchover.

TRANSPORT

Bus Services

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what advice he offers to local authorities on their subsidy regime for bus services; and what discussions he has had with the Department for Education and Skills on school transport policies. [162826]

Mr. McNulty: It is for local authorities to determine their policies and procedures for the subsidy of bus services in their area, within the framework set by the Transport Acts 1985 and 2000. We have however provided a guide to good practice on the procurement of local bus and community transport services, including school transport services. This guide is currently being revised and up-dated.

Ministers and officials of this Department and the Department for Education and Skills have frequent discussions on school transport issues. In September 2003, the two Departments jointly published "Travelling to School: an action plan", setting out measures to reduce car dependency and increase the proportion of children walking, cycling and taking the bus to school. We are working closely together on the implementation of the action plan and the School Transport Bill.

Cycling Accidents

Jim Dowd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to reduce the level of accidents and injuries among cyclists aged 16 years and under; and if he will include the compulsory wearing of safety helmets. [155220]

Mr. Jamieson: We have a safer cycling programme, which applies both to cyclists aged 16 and under, and older cyclists. This package of measures includes improved infrastructure—better cycle routes, off road cycle tracks, cycle lanes, advance stop lines, toucan crossings etc.; better driving standards and advice for cyclists, for example we are encouraging better facilities for cyclists and improving training and testing for motorists. It also covers the promotion of measures which cyclists can take to protect themselves, such as taking cycle training, making themselves conspicuous and wearing a cycle helmet.

Measures specifically aimed at younger cyclists include a Cycle Sense campaign. This is aimed at teenagers and was launched on 21 May last year. It encourages teenagers to wear cycle helmets and consists of posters and a Cycle Sense website. For younger cyclists we also produce "Arrive Alive"—a Highway Code for young road users, and we have also worked in partnership with Disney, using their "Recess" characters to promote safer cycling for children through "Cycle Smart" comics and posters. These are available free through local authority road safety officers.

Our position on compulsion has been that at current wearing rates it would cause enforcement difficulties and could have an effect on cycling levels. But the Government will keep their policies in this as in all areas under review in the light of discussion in Parliament and elsewhere.

Departmental Scientific Adviser

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department has a Chief Scientific Adviser. [162480]

Mr. McNulty: Professor Frank Kelly joined the Department for Transport as its Chief Scientific Adviser in August 2003.

E-business Strategy

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to produce his Department's e-business strategy. [162814]

Mr. McNulty: A summary of the Department's e-business strategy was presented on page 116 of the Department's Annual Report 2003 (Cm 5907). Good progress has continued to be made during 2003–04, including the launch of an internet service for the booking of practical Driving Tests, a Motoring section of the new DirectGov service and a pilot service for the online payment of Vehicle Excise Duty.

Fuel-efficient Vehicles

Claire Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to extend the grant scheme for fuel efficient and hybrid powered vehicles. [162906]

Mr. Jamieson: Overall DfT funding for the Transport Energy programmes, including the Powershift grant programme, which supports purchases of clean hybrid and alternatively fuelled vehicles, will be nearly £30 million in 2004–05, the same level as in 2003–04. We will be carrying out a consultation exercise later this year to invite views on how well the Transport Energy grant programmes are assisting the delivery of the Government's policy objectives in the Powering Future Vehicles Strategy, and how the programmes could be improved.

Headlamp Glare

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library the conclusions of the research project sponsored by his Department into the safe limits for headlamp glare; and if he will make a statement on the action the Government intend to take in the light of the conclusions of the report. [163152]

Mr. Jamieson: The research was carried out by ICE Ergonomics Ltd. Copies of the "Vehicle Lighting: Headlamp Glare and Driver Vision" summary report have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

The Department for Transport is actively involved in developing international standards for improved vehicle lighting and will continue to monitor proposals for new headlamp regulations and to oppose them where there is a possibility of increased glare.

Research is currently being carried out into headlamp misalignment as a cause of annual roadworthiness test failure for heavy goods vehicles. The results will be used to consider how the incidence of poorly adjusted headlamps could be reduced.

The Department is also developing protocols for a Primary New Car Assessment Programme looking at lighting and other safety features. If these are adopted as a basis for a European consumer information programme, assessment of headlamps for glare will contribute to the vehicle's rating.

M1

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons the roadworks being undertaken between junctions 1 and 2 of the M1 motorway and the roadworks being undertaken on Hendon Way, London have not been phased and carried out consecutively. [162859]

Dr. Howells: The Highways Agency and Transport for London liaised prior to the start of these works to avoid clashes of major works likely to cause severe disruption. These meetings concluded that certain works could be carried out simultaneously.

The works by Transport for London are currently being carried out at the southern end of the A41 only during off-peak hours. The Highways Agency works are continuing 24 hours a day, seven days a week so that they can be completed in the shortest time with minimal inconvenience to the public.

Monitoring by both the Highways Agency and Transport for London has indicated no serious problems for motorists.

Science Strategy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he has taken to enhance science in his Department since the publication of the Government's science strategy, Investing in Innovation. [162243]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport (DfT) has maintained its commitment to the use of science for policy making and delivery. DfTs expenditure on Science, Engineering and Technology remains at the levels indicated in the annual Office of Science and Technology publication "The Forward Look". This includes commissioned research expenditure of around £45 million per year.

In August 2003 Professor Frank Kelly joined the Department as Chief Scientific Adviser. He is focusing on ensuring that DfT scientific activities are well directed and policies are based on sound scientific advice. He also leads on developing a technology strategy for the Department.

In December 2003, the Department published an Evidence and Research Strategy, which aims to help achieve the goal of better evidence based policy-making by taking a strategic look at its future evidence needs. This will inform the planning and execution of the Department's research.

The Department has also created a web-based Research Management Database (RMD) which will make it easier for departmental staff as well as people outside the Department to access the results of the research funded by the DfT. The RMD can be accessed at http://www.rmd.dft.gov.uk.

DfT is continuing to implement the recommendations of the 2002 Cross Cutting Review of Science in Government, and Investing in Innovation. This includes ensuring that our research, and evidence and research expertise are managed effectively.

We support a Horizons responsive research programme, which supports innovative research on the challenges and opportunities DfT might face over the next decade and beyond. The programme invites proposals from external researchers via a series of individual calls.

Renewed emphasis is being put on maximising the use of Departmental Science to promote innovation within the public services and the economy at large. One of the avenues being explored is the opportunities for innovation through the freeing up of information eg real time traffic data.

Speeding

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road traffic accidents which occured in Essex during 2003 were primarily caused by speed; and if he will make a statement. [156314]

Mr. Jamieson: Routine statistics do not record the primary cause of a road accident. However, under a pilot scheme, since 1999 Essex police force has provided information on contributory factors to accidents. The latest year for which pilot data are available is 2002. The number of reported injury accidents in Essex in 2002 for which 'excessive speed' was deemed by the police to be one of the contributory factors, was 964. These 964 accidents resulted in 27 deaths, 270 serious injuries and 1,118 slight injuries.

Essex is one of 14 police forces for which pilot data are available. Overall, the pilot results for 2002 show that 'excessive speed' was deemed to be a factor in some 15 per cent. of injury accidents. The proportion of accidents where 'excessive speed' is coded as a factor rises with the severity of the accident; it applied to 13 per cent. of slight accidents, 23 per cent. of serious accidents and 33 per cen. of fatal accidents in the pilot areas in 2002. If these proportions were the same across the whole of the country, this would mean that 1,132 deaths, 8,274 serious injuries and 34,216 slight injuries were sustained in accidents where excessive speed was deemed to be a contributory factor.

The contributory factor data are based on the opinions of police officers. In the case of accidents reported by a member of the public at a police station, these factors have to be determined from their description of the accident.

The true extent of the influence of speed as a contributory factor in road traffic accidents may be even greater than suggested by the single factor 'excessive speed', as some other factors—such as 'following too close'—may also be associated with inappropriate speed. My Department is undertaking further analysis of the pilot contributory factor data and will publish an article later in the year.

Starting in January 2005 this pilot scheme will be replaced by a new set of questions on contributory factors, which will henceforward form an integral part of the road accident reporting system and will be collected by all police forces for accidents reported at scene by a police officer.

Steer Davies Gleave

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 17 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 288W, on Steer Davies Gleave, if he will list the contracts undertaken by Steer Davies Gleave in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [163046]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority has placed the following contracts (with a value of over £25,000) with Steer Davies Gleave in the financial years 2002–03 and 2003–04.

	£000[1] *total value*
2002–03	
Modelling and strategic review of rail industry	75
Review of International rail services	70
Interchange needs	69
2003–04	
General Freight and value proposition analysis	108
Freight Studies—General Freight and Value Proposition Analysis	98
Remit for Study of Effects of Change Positions Pattern	124
West Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy: Passenger Demand Analysis and Forecasting	37
West Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy Passenger Counts and Surveys	38
RPC delivery best practice in information provision across the rail industry	87
Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy: Passenger demand analysis and forecasting	32
Policy of build of new stations	100
WCRM review project	85
Development of Regional Planning assessment for North West England	221
Freight Studies—Value Proposition analysis	138
Recalibration of PLANET south models	116

[1] Rounded

Vehicle Excise Duty

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from people who are unable to renew their vehicle excise duty at the appropriate time owing to being out of the country for the period before their existing vehicle excise duty expires; if he will allow a period of grace so that such people can tax their cars on their return to the United Kingdom and not be prosecuted for driving without having paid the duty during the period of grace; and if he will make a statement. [161963]

Mr. Jamieson: It is already possible for motorists who are abroad when their vehicle licence becomes due for renewal to relicense their vehicle up to six weeks in advance of expiry date. Tax discs can be posted to applicants at a forwarding address abroad. The law also allows motorists a further 14 days from the date the licence was due, in which to relicense. If the keeper of a vehicle is abroad for a protracted period of time and intends to take a licensed vehicle off the road, they may make a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN) to this effect to DVLA and will receive a refund for every full month of unexpired vehicle excise duty. However, if the vehicle is used or kept on the public road it must be licensed.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Cleveland Coroner Inquiry

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Department expects to announce the outcome of the inquiry into the conduct of the Cleveland Coroner. [162985]

Mr. Leslie: His Honour Judge Milford QC presented his report of the investigation into the conduct of Coroner Sheffield in December 2003. As I have said previously, my noble and learned Friend the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor is keen to conclude this matter, but the report has required detailed consideration. It is not possible to set a specific date for public announcement at this stage.

Fines (Salisbury Courts)

Mr. Key: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what percentage of fines imposed have been paid in *(a)* Salisbury magistrates court and *(b)* Salisbury Crown court in the past 12 months. [162447]

Mr. Leslie: Magistrates Courts Committees (MCCs) have a responsibility for the collection of a range of debts imposed by both the magistrates courts and the Crown court.

Data are collected centrally at a MCC level, rather than at individual court level. The Wiltshire MCC accounting system is therefore unable to separately identify the percentage of fines paid in Salisbury magistrates court or imposed by the Crown court.

For 2003–04 Wiltshire MCCs fines payment rate for the year to date at the end of January was 94 per cent.

Liability Claims

Brian Cotter: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what his policy is on enabling fixed cost awards for successful employers' liability and public liability claims. [162658]

Mr. Lammy: The cost of resolving claims should be reasonable and proportionate and the Department is working with other government departments, the Civil Justice Council, representative bodies from the legal, insurance and local government sectors to determine what role measures such as fixed recoverable costs can play in delivering this aim and helping to resolve disputes more quickly.

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many *(a)* solely state-financed and *(b)* public-private partnership and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible have been launched in each region in each of the last 10 years. [160977]

Mr. Leslie: The table shows how many *(a)* solely state financed and *(b)* public-private and private finance initiative projects the DCA has launched in each of the last 10 years. The solely state financed projects are for property and construction projects. The figures for the public-private and private finance initiative projects include IT and property and construction projects.

	Solely state financed	*Region*	*Public-private and private finance initiative projects*	*Region*
1994–95	3	Wales and Chester	0	
	1	South Eastern		
1995–96	2	South Eastern	0	
1996–97	0		0	
1997–98	0		2	National
1998–99	0		0	
1999–2000	1	Western	0	
2000–01	0		2	National
2001–02	0		0	—
2002–03	0		0	—
2003–04	0		1	South Eastern
(expected)			1	North Eastern
			1	Western

Hutton Inquiry

Chris Grayling: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total cost to public funds was of the Hutton inquiry. [162609]

Mr. Leslie: I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Torbay (Mr. Sanders) on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 217W.

Supreme Court

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs which consultees argued against the inclusion of Scottish criminal law appeals within the jurisdiction of the new UK Supreme Court. [162326]

Mr. Leslie: The Government published a summary of responses in January 2004. It has also published the full responses given by consultees on the Department for Constitutional Affairs website.

The Government have proposed that Scottish Criminal Law Appeals should not be included within the jurisdiction of the new UK Supreme Court. The majority of consultees agreed. These included the Law Society of Scotland, the Scottish Executive, Professor Hector MacQueen and Lord Mackay of Clashfern.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment has been made of the possible change in fees in civil cases that may be required following the establishment of the UK Supreme Court in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the rest of the UK. [162329]

Mr. Leslie: The costs of the United Kingdom Supreme Court attributable to civil business will be met by fee recovery in England and Wales; and in Northern Ireland. The Government are working closely with the Scottish Executive to develop an appropriate funding mechanism for Scotland. No detailed assessment can be made of changes in fee levels until a location is chosen for the Supreme Court,

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when Ministers in the Department last met Scottish Ministers to discuss the proposals for a new UK Supreme Court. [162330]

Mr. Leslie: My noble and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor last met the First Minister of Scotland on 20 February 2004 and discussed the proposals for a new UK Supreme Court.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether Ministers in the Department have met representatives of *(a)* the Law Society of Scotland, *(b)* the Faculty of Advocates, *(c)* the Shrieval Bench, *(d)* Scottish judges and *(e)* the Scottish Legal Aid Board to discuss the proposals for a new UK Supreme Court. [162331]

Mr. Leslie: Ministers in the Department for Constitutional Affairs have informally met representatives of the Faculty of Advocates and Scottish judges to discuss proposals for a new UK Supreme Court.

There has been an exchange of correspondence with the Law Society of Scotland and this and other organisations responded to the Department's consultation paper on the proposed UK Supreme Court.

There have been no meetings between Department for Constitutional Affairs Ministers and either the Shrieval Bench or the Scottish Legal Aid Board.

HEALTH

Social Work

13. **Ms Munn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in increasing the number of people applying to courses leading to a qualification in social work. [162791]

Dr. Ladyman: The introduction of the social work degree in September 2003, a non means tested bursary for students not supported through training by their employer and our on-going national recruitment campaign is having a positive effect on applications to approved courses and in widening participation. The last available data in 2002 showed an increase in applications of 6 per cent.

Patients Forums

14. **Ms Oona King:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will increase the support given to patients forums. [162792]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Support for patients forums is organised by the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health. The budget for the Commission is £35.4 million in financial year 2003–04 and contracts have been awarded for support organisations to provide day to day support for forums.

Obesity

15. **Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on his Department's policy to tackle obesity. [162793]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Tackling obesity is at the heart of many of the Government's health priority areas. Prevention is the best long-term approach, especially in children, by improving diet and promoting physical activity. The Public Health White Paper will provide the overarching framework for work on diet and nutrition, physical activity and obesity.

Hospital-acquired Infections

16. **Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he plans to issue new guidance on treatment and prevention of hospital-acquired infections. [162794]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Our action plan "Winning Ways—Working together to reduce Healthcare Associated Infection in England" is intended to ensure the implementation of existing guidance. It has a strong focus on better information and monitoring at the local level to secure change, with further guidance in due course.

Health Services (West Worcestershire)

17. **Sir Michael Spicer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish plans for the future of the health service in the constituency of West Worcestershire. [162795]

Dr. Ladyman: South Worcestershire Primary Care Trust is responsible for commissioning health care in West Worcestershire, to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services.

Over the current three year period, South Worcestershire's allocation will increase in cash terms by £60.6 million or over 30 per cent. That is a significant level of investment and will deliver real benefits and results for the people of West Worcestershire.

Blood Donation

18. **Nick Harvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to extend the ban on blood donations from those who have received a blood transfusion since 1980 to organ recipients; and if he will make a statement. [162796]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Individuals who have had an organ transplant would be excluded from being blood donors because of their underlying condition, which led to that organ transplant.

Mr. Havard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Blood and Tissues for Transplantation has decided whether to ban recipients of blood from donating blood; and when the decision will be made public. [153864]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Blood and Tissues for Transplantation met on 22 January to discuss further measures to safeguard the blood supply against the possible risk of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD). The Committee advised that the United Kingdom blood services should exclude those people who have previously received a blood transfusion since 1980 as a precautionary measure against the risk of vCJD being transmitted by blood and blood components. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health made a statement to the House on this issue on 16 March.

Sports Provision

19. **Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to ensure that primary care trusts, local authorities and others have shared objectives with regard to sport and physical activity. [162797]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The cross-Government Activity Co-ordination Team (ACT), jointly chaired by myself and my hon. Friend, the Minister of State at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (Richard Caborn), is drawing up a plan to increase physical activity levels across England and this will include work by the national health service, local government and others.

Digital Hearing Aids

21. **Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on access to digital hearing aids. [162799]

Dr. Ladyman: The Royal National Institute for Deaf People has successfully managed the Modernising Hearing Aid Services (MHAS) project on behalf of my Department. Already digital hearing aids are available in two thirds of the National Health Service audiology departments in England and by April 2005, they will be available throughout England.

Administration Costs

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will undertake to reduce the administration costs of *(a)* strategic health authorities, *(b)* primary care trusts and *(c)* NHS trusts by setting up shared administration and human resources systems. [157581]

Mr. Hutton: The Department has initiated a number of initiatives to reduce the administration and human resource costs of all National Health Service bodies. These include the setting up of two shared service centres to provide financial services and the sponsoring of a number of projects designed to support the NHS in recruiting, retaining and managing its workforce.

The shared financial service centres in Bristol and Leeds were set up as pilots last year. These have been successful and the Department is currently advertising for a private sector partner to help expand the centres and make their services available across the NHS. The human resources projects cover electronic recruitment and careers, and staff records/payroll. The recruitment and careers project is currently being rolled out across the NHS and staff records/payroll will be piloted this year.

Alcohol-related Violence

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures his Department has taken to ensure that the NHS co-operates with other agencies to tackle alcohol-related violence. [162781]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Crime and disorder reduction partnerships tackle crime at local level. National health service involvement in tackling alcohol-related crime will be strengthened when primary care trusts become responsible authorities within these partnerships from April 2004.

Angiography

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) pursuant to his Answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1200W, on angiography, how many waits were under *(a)* three, *(b)* six, *(c)* nine, *(d)* 12 and *(e)* 15 months; [156246]

(2) pursuant to his Answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1200W, on angiography, how many waits were under *(a)* three, *(b)* six, *(c)* nine, *(d)* 12 and *(e)* 15 months for (i) England and (ii) each Strategic Health Authority. [158964]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

No patient will wait more than nine months from April 2004.

Berners Willi Syndrome

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in the UK have Berners Willi Syndrome; what the cost was to *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* social services departments of treating them in the last financial year; and if he will make a statement. [162598]

Dr. Ladyman: There are estimated to be about 1,100 people with Prader Willi Syndrome (PWS) in England. Packages of care reflecting individual needs are drawn up locally. Records of expenditure relating specifically to people suffering from PWS are not collected centrally.

Carers Assessments

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many carers assessments were carried out by each local authority in England during *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [162233]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* Information showing the number of carer assessments carried out by each council in England for the year 2001–02 and 2002–03, has been placed in the Library.

Chronic Disease Management

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the total cost of chronic disease to *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* the economy as a whole. [157582]

Mr. Hutton: There is a range of evidence that confirms that patients with chronic conditions make the most use of health services. For example, around 80 per cent. of general practice consultations and 60 per cent. of hospital bed usage relates to chronic diseases. It is, however, difficult to estimate the full costs of these conditions reliably. Spending on the disease-focused national service frameworks was estimated at £9.9 billion in 2002–03 by Derek Wanless in "Securing our Future Health: Taking a Long-Term View", but this represents only a part of the costs of chronic disease.

Improving the care offered to people with chronic conditions now represents a major challenge to the National Health Service and partner organisations and we have just announced plans to establish demonstration sites within each strategic health authority as part of a programme to address this challenge.

Dentistry

Mr. Watts: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vacancies there are for NHS *(a)* general practitioners and *(b)* dentists in each primary care trust. [158181]

Mr. Hutton: Information on the number of general practitioners (GP) vacancies in each primary care trust that occurred between 1 April 2002 and 31 March 2003 has been placed in the Library.

The recruitment, retention and vacancy survey is a count of all GP vacancies that have occurred during each year. It will include existing posts that doctors have left and also new posts created to increase the work force, even where they were filled very quickly. The number of vacancies in parts is a result of there being more posts overall, reflecting the Government's plan to increase the GP work force.

In the general dental service dentists are recruited and employed by independent contractors. This information is therefore not available centrally.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what incentives are being offered to dentists to practise NHS dentistry in Pendle. [162783]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Primary Care Trust has been identified as one of the 16 PCTs where access is a significant problem. The National Health Service dentistry support team is currently working with the PCT to provide advice and guidance on best practice in increasing access and modernising dentistry locally, backed by £9 million nationally. A Dental Action Plan has been developed jointly with the two neighbouring primary care trusts in East Lancashire This plan is wide-ranging, but includes offering incentive grants to dental students willing to practice in the area for three to five years following vocational training, equating to £3,000 per year.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the reasons for dentists leaving the NHS for the private sector; and if he will make a statement. [160768]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not itself commissioned any such research. However, the Department has been aware, through working with the dental profession and from various reports by independent bodies such as the Audit Commission, that there is a high level of discontent amongst dentists with the current arrangements. Dentists tell us that the current remuneration system, which is based on fee for item of service, feels like a treadmill and is the main cause of dissatisfaction among dentists and patients. It gears payments towards treatment rather than prevention and its piecework nature is thought to act as a barrier to dentists agreeing to undertake National Health Service work.

In 2001, the then Chief Dental Officer, Dame Margaret Seward, was invited to lead a working group, comprising representatives from the profession, patient groups and other stakeholders, to look at the options to modernise NHS dentistry, building on the Government's strategy document, "Modernising NHS Dentistry: Implementing the NHS Plan", published in September 2000.

The group's conclusions are set out in "NHS Dentistry: Options for Change", which was published in August 2002. The key themes and priorities that emerged were the need for local commissioning and funding and new methods of remuneration for general dental practitioners.

We have followed up this work by taking powers through the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 to undertake wide-ranging reform of NHS dentistry. Under these proposals, primary care trusts will assume responsibility for commissioning primary dental care services. With these responsibilities will go the financial resources,

totalling some £1.3 billion this year (2003-04), which are currently held centrally. These changes are aimed to underpin modernised, high-quality primary dental care services properly integrated with the rest of the NHS and providing better access, improved patient experience and better working lives for dentists and their staff.

East Midlands Ambulance Service

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on recent trends in the response times by the East Midlands Ambulance Service to Category A emergency call outs within the Melton, Rutland and Harborough Primary Care Trust Area; and if he will set up an inquiry into the management of this ambulance service. [162589]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on recent trends by the East Midlands Ambulance Service to Category A emergency call outs within the Melton, Rutland and Harborough Primary Care Trust area are not available centrally.

Information about the performance of ambulance trusts is published annually in a statistical bulletin. The latest data are in "Ambulance Services, England: 2002–03". A copy of the bulletin is available in the Library and at www.publications.doh.gov.uk/public/sb0313.htm.

In line with "Shifting the Balance of Power", it is for Trent and Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland strategic health authorities to decide whether an inquiry into the management of the trust is necessary.

Elderly People

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his policy is for the rehabilitation of elderly people; and if he will make a statement. [162913]

Dr. Ladyman: The development and expansion of intermediate care services is key to the Government's policy for the rehabilitation of elderly people. In 2003–04 a total of £405 million has been made available to the national health service for intermediate care services.

The national service framework (NSF) for older people asks the NHS and local councils, in partnership with independent sector providers, to develop an appropriate range of services that aid rehabilitation and recovery. Individual care plans should clearly identify any potential for rehabilitation.

Environmental Protection

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mechanisms exist to assess *(a)* the health benefits and *(b)* the potential savings for the NHS in the regulatory impact assessments undertaken by (i) Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and (ii) Department of Trade and Industry on proposed environmental protection measures. [155429]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* I understand all regulatory impact assessments (RIAs) undertaken by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department for Trade and Industry include details, where appropriate, of not only the obvious costs and benefits of the proposal but also the wider economic, social and environmental impacts. This includes health benefits and, where appropriate, public sector impacts, including savings. Information regarding the costs and benefits analysis of policy proposals is contained in the Cabinet Office guidance, Better Policy Making: A Guide To Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Within DEFRA, use of the integrated policy appraisal screening tool is also encouraged, which provides a checklist of questions on potential impacts of a proposed policy, including a question on access to National Health Service services.

Analytical work within DEFRA also covers the quantification and valuation of health benefits and costs to inform policy making and feed directly into the RIA process. For example, considerable work has been undertaken on quantifying and valuing the health benefits of improved air quality, on valuing the benefits of improvements to bathing water quality and on valuing the "intangible" impacts of flooding, that is the health and stress effects associated with flooding.

DEFRA will be shortly issuing further guidance to operating authorities on the application of the results of research on the health and stress impacts of flooding for use in project appraisal.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the total cost of his Department's policy to franchise the management of failing NHS trusts. [154100]

Mr. Hutton: Staff time is not recorded by task undertaken and it is therefore not possible to differentiate the amount of time allocated to this task by the organisations involved.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's policy is on franchising the management of failing NHS trusts. [154141]

Mr. Hutton: National health service franchising is a way of introducing new senior management to poorly performing NHS organisations as a means of improving performance.

Franchising is only considered for zero star trusts, which are unable to demonstrate their capacity under existing management for sustainable improvements in performance. Normally, it is a last resort for trusts where less direct forms of assistance, support and/or intervention have already failed or are considered unlikely to succeed.

It is for strategic health authorities to decide what support and intervention is necessary in zero star trusts and primary care trusts.

Franchise Managers

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what role the Department has played in appointing franchise managers to zero star acute hospital trusts, with

particular reference to *(a)* their terms of employment, *(b)* their remuneration packages and *(c)* approving their plans for improving the performance of the trust. [154835]

Mr. Hutton: The chief executives appointed to the seven national health service trusts that have been franchised were appointed and employed by the NHS trust chairs and non-executives on behalf of the trusts. The terms of their employment and remuneration are matters for the appointments and remuneration committees of the respective trust boards, as is the case for all NHS trust chief executive appointments.

The Department was represented on each candidate's interview panel.

Franchise plans are documents that set out future operational proposals for the trust, and formed the basis of the franchise application. The Department representatives saw the franchise plans as they were part of the recruitment process.

Hip Replacements

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the latest estimated cost is of a hip replacement operation on the NHS. [162790]

Mr. Hutton: According to the National Schedule of Reference Costs 2003, the national average cost of a primary hip replacement undertaken by a National Health Service trust as a planned elective inpatient admission is £4,660.

Hospital Car Park Charges

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals *(a)* charge and *(b)* do not charge (i) staff, (ii) visitors and (iii) patients to park. [157908]

Mr. Hutton: It is a matter for individual National Health Service trusts to decide whether to charge for car parking in the light of local circumstances. Information on this activity is, therefore, not collected centrally.

Medical Contracts

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the achievability of his target of placing all general practitioners on *(a)* personal medical service and *(b)* general medical services contracts by 31st March. [158503]

Mr. Hutton: We expect the majority of general practitioners to have entered into valid contracts by 1 April 2004.

NHS Professionals

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the funding for NHS Professionals for the 2002–03 financial year and each of the previous years since inception was spent on *(a)* staff salaries, *(b)* infrastructure and premises costs and *(c)* marketing and advertising; and if he will make a statement. [160497]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* This information is not held centrally. The newly established NHS Professionals special health authority will identify expenditure on these areas separately in future.

Nursing

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has collated on how many black and ethnic minority nurses in the NHS are paid less than their white counterparts. [158108]

Mr. Hutton: This information is not collected centrally.

The proposed new pay system for the non-medical workforce, "Agenda for Change", developed in partnership with the trades unions, is designed to ensure there is equal pay for work of equal value for all non-medical staff regardless of their ethnic origin.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will reply to the question reference 156621 tabled by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland on 25 February 2004, on the promotion of organ donation. [163267]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A reply was sent to the hon. Member on Monday 22 March.

Patient Power

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to implement the Government's commitment to give patients more power over the treatment they receive. [156827]

Mr. Hutton: Building on the Best: Choice, Responsiveness and Equity in the NHS, published on 9 December 2003, sets out what steps we are taking to increase patient choice in the national health service. The document includes six priorities for immediate action including extending choice in treatment and care. One of the six priorities emphasises the importance of information so that patients have the power and confidence to work in partnership with clinical staff and share decisions about their care and treatment.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures his Department is taking in response to Commission for Health Improvement concerns on the capacity of primary care trusts to use commissioning as a lever for improvement. [160918]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* Primary care trusts (PCTs) currently control 75 per cent. of the total National Health Service budget and from April 2004 that will increase to 81 per cent. This places PCTs in the forefront of the modernisation agenda, with the resources at their disposal to deliver improvements for their local populations. Through the Modernisation Agency, PCTs will continue to have access to high quality support programmes (such as the national primary and care trust development programme) that provide opportunities for the sharing of good practice and expert advice.

In addition, work is currently under way to identify opportunities for primary care clinicians to become more actively involved in the commissioning process. This will facilitate further clinician to clinician commissioning using accepted clinical care pathways.

Private Health Providers

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what sums the NHS has paid to private health providers in each year since 2003; and how much has been paid this year. [158082]

Mr. Hutton: The Department does not hold centrally information on the amount the National Health Service has paid to private health providers in each year since 2003. The exception is the independent sector treatment centre programme. The centre at Daventry opened in October 2003 and we estimate that, by the end of March 2004, the amount paid to the provider will be £1.1 million. The national mobile cataract treatment centre opened in February 2004 and we estimate that, by the end of March 2004, the amount paid will be £2 million.

Recruitment

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of recruitment of civil servants for the Department was in each financial year since 1996–97, broken down by *(a)* delegated or contracted out recruitment procedures and *(b)* recruitment procedures carried out by the Department. [158176]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not keep a record of the cost of recruitment of civil servants broken down by delegated or contracted out recruitment procedures.

The recruitment of staff into the Department is delegated to managers with the help of their corporate development teams. The information on the cost of recruitment procedures carried out by the Department can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Temporary Staff

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff the Department employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Department paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158244]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the contract/employment agency staff costs for years 2001–02 to 2003–04, and the percentage of contract/employment agency costs as a percentage of total staff costs. Employment agency costs are not kept separately.

Year	*Amount (£)*	*Percentage*
2001–02	7,589,927	5
2002–03	10,245,940	7
2003–04[1]	10,190,618	8

[1] Expenditure in 2003–04 is April 2003 to January 2004.

The number of temporary staff employed through employment agencies and the percentage this is of the total staff employed can be provided only at disproportionate cost. Temporary staff employed through employment agencies are recruited by managers according to business needs. The Department does not keep a central record of the number of temporary staff employed through employment agencies.

Trusts (Franchise Appointments)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the original franchise appointments made by trusts with no stars and the current status of those appointments. [155785]

Mr. Hutton: When Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals National Health Service Trust was franchised in April 2002, Andrew Morris was appointed as chief executive for one year while he mentored Glen Douglas in the role. As planned, Glen Douglas took over as chief executive when Andrew Morris left in April 2003. Mr. Douglas remains in post.

When Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust was franchised in May 2002, Sue Jennings was appointed as chief executive while continuing her post as chief executive of Basildon and Thurrock NHS Trust. Ms Jennings remains in post at Dartford and Gravesham. A new chief executive has since been recruited at Basildon and Thurrock.

When East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust was franchised in November 2002, Nick Carver was appointed as chief executive. Mr. Carver remains in post.

When University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust was franchised in May 2002, David Roberts became the chief executive at the trust. Mr. Roberts remains in post.

When Barnet and Chase Farm NHS Trust was franchised in February 2002, Paul O'Connor was appointed as chief executive. Mr. O'Connor resigned in January 2004.

When Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust was franchised in April 2002, Alan Bedford was appointed as chief executive. Mr. Bedford resigned in February 2004.

Wanless Report

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is planning to take in response to the Wanless report on public health. [162786]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We have transformed the National Health Service through extra investment and the hard work of staff.

We are turning our attention to the key public health challenges—obesity, smoking and sexually transmitted infections- and continue to reduce health inequalities.

We will respond to Wanless Report through the forthcoming White Paper on improving people's health. This will be informed by 'Choosing Health', launched on 3 March, which will look at the action required to improve people's health.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

End of Life Vehicles Directive

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment her Department has made of the impact of the End of Life Vehicles Directive, on *(a)* the number of old and inefficient polluting vehicles on the road, *(b)* the number of cars abandoned and *(c)* the price of scrapping an old car. [163138]

Mr. Timms: Implementation of the End-of-Life Vehicles Directive is not expected to affect significantly the average age of vehicles being scrapped. The Department's Regulatory Impact Assessment of 20 June 2002, relating to the Government's decision to introduce producer responsibility for free take-back of all complete ELVs from 2007, did include an estimate of the potential for an increase in the level of vehicles abandoned annually. That estimate was, however, made before the Government took a number of initiatives to bear down on the problem of abandoned vehicles, and was based on ELV processing and treatment costs of £60, whereas latest estimates put these at £16–39. The cost to a last owner of scrapping an old car depends upon a number of factors, including location, age, make, and condition, and the prevailing price of scrap metal.

Energy Supplies

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on *(a)* recent trends in investment in renewable energy and *(b)* the effect of those trends upon residents in Buckingham. [161568]

Mr. Timms: Recent trends in renewable energy investment have been highly encouraging. More new capacity has been constructed in the last few years than in the previous decade, and a significant amount is currently in the pipeline. This covers a wide range of technologies including onshore and offshore wind, solar and biomass.

I am not aware of any proposals for new development in Buckingham arising from these trends.

EU Regional Policy

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government have discussed the proposal for EU Regional Policy with the European Commission; and if she will make a statement. [160739]

Jacqui Smith: I attended an Informal Ministerial meeting in Portlaoise on 27 February, where the future of EU Regional Policy was discussed. I set out the UK's proposals for reform of the Structural and Cohesion Funds post-2006. A range of views were put forward by the Commission and by other member states.

Negotiations on the reform of EU Regional Policy are still at an early stage. The decision on the 2007–13 Structural and Cohesion Funds must be made by unanimity. Currently, there is no consensus among member states on the best way forward.

Supermarket Supply

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to strengthen the Code of Practice between supermarkets and suppliers. [162652]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Office of Fair Trading has recently announced an audit of the supermarkets own records to determine whether there is evidence to support complaints about the code made by various suppliers. DTI is ready to look closely at their findings and any recommendations for action.

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has received proposing *(a)* a statutory code of practice between supermarkets and suppliers and *(b)* a retail regulator. [162653]

Mr. Sutcliffe: There have been a number of representations from hon. Members.

British Electricity Trading and Transmission Arrangements

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate her Department has made of the likely increase in transmission charges for Scottish generators further to the British Electricity Trading and Transmission Arrangements package of reforms. [162942]

Mr. Timms: The DTI together with Ofgem has carried out an analysis of the possible impact of BETTA as part of the Energy Bill Regulatory Impact Assessment. This includes an analysis of the increases in transmission charges on Scottish generation. The RIA can be found at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/leg_and_reg/acts/ria.pdf

Chiefly the RIA found that the main market participants, British Energy and the two vertically integrated incumbents, Scottish Power and Scottish and Southern would be exposed to initial costs of around £7.5 million and ongoing costs of some £0.5 million per annum. It is important to note that this excludes the redistributive effects brought about by a Great Britain wide transmission-charging regime.

However transmission charges for Scottish generators have yet to be finalised. National Grid, the GB System Operator designate, launched the start of their consultation process on transmission charging under BETTA in December 2003. Subsequently and following discussion with the industry, Ofgem and DTI, National Grid published an addendum to the original consultation setting out how charges may vary with different assumptions. National Grid will shortly be publishing their next consultation document, and will issue its final proposals in time for Ofgem to consider and approve by the end of October. National Grid's consultation documents can be found on their website.

The increase in transmission charges to Scottish generators needs to be seen in the context of a package of reforms that make up BETTA. This increase will be offset by the removal of current interconnector charges and charges for access to the England and Wales market. There will also be lower connection charges for Scottish generation.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will publish in full the Ofgem estimates of the net impact of British Electricity Trading and Transmission Arrangements on Scottish generators. [162943]

Mr. Timms: The DTI together with Ofgem has carried out an analysis of the possible impact of BETTA as part of the Energy Bill Regulatory Impact Assessment, including an analysis of the impact of BETTA on Scottish generation. The RIA can be found at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/leg and reg/acts/ria.pdf

Company Investment (Middle East)

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice is given to UK companies on investment in *(a)* Israel and *(b)* the Occupied Territories of Palestine. [162037]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) does not actively promote investment opportunities overseas in any particular market. UKTI monitors commercial developments in Israel and the Palestinian territories and alerts UK companies on a case by case basis to specific opportunities in each market. UKTI is ready to offer general advice and support to all UK companies wishing to invest overseas, but it is for the companies themselves to judge the benefits and risks of overseas investment in any market and take decisions accordingly.

Conferences and Seminars

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 12 March 2004, *Official Report*, col. 1775W, on conferences and seminars, for what reason she does not maintain a central register of the *(a)* number and *(b)* cost of conferences and seminars held since June 2001. [162604]

Ms Hewitt: Responsibility for conferences and seminars rests with individual business units in DTI. Statistics on such events with associated costs are not normally required for business reasons and are therefore not collected centrally.

Export Contracts (Iraq)

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the *(a)* type and *(b)* value of export contracts to the Iraqi Ministry of Defence for each year since 1979; and if she will list those contracts which were supported by export credits. [148539]

Ms Hewitt: I apologise for the delay in responding to this question. This Department does not keep records of contracts to the Iraqi Ministry of Defence.

From records available, the contracts with Iraqi defence ministries which were supported by ECGD's Project Group during this period were as follows:

Year	*Type*	*£ million*
1986	Radio Communications Equipment	26.4
1986	Vehicle-mounted aircraft ground power units	1.6
1986	Radio Communications Equipment	9.7
1986	Radio Communications Equipment	5.5
1986	Radio Communications Equipment	0.7
1986	Radars	0.9
1987	Vehicle-mounted aircraft ground power units	4.2
1997	Motor Generator Units	0.9
1988	HF Receiving Stations	0.2
1988	Scanning Electron Microscope	0.1
1989	Aircraft Ground support air conditioning system	2.9

Additionally during this period ECGD's Insurance Services Group—privatised in 1991—provided credit insurance cover for a number of contracts with Iraqi defence ministries on cash or short terms of payment. From the partial records available at the time of Lord Justice Scott's Inquiry (comprehensive records were only available from 1987), ECGD was able to document having approved over £220 million of credit limits in respect of business on such terms with Iraqi defence ministries, but corresponding records of the amount of business actually transacted against these limits were not available. ECGD did not require to be advised of the types of goods supported under these short term policies although it was a condition of cover that an export licence be obtained by the exporter where this was required.

This information was made available by ECGD to Lord Justice Scott at the time of his Inquiry.

Miners' Compensation

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many former miners who worked in both the private mining industry and for the National Coal Board have waited for longer than *(a)* four years, *(b)* three years and *(c)* two years for their respiratory claim to be resolved. [161337]

Nigel Griffiths: As of 12 March 2004 the figures are:

	Over four years	*Between three to four years*	*Between two to three years*
Claims outstanding	1,913	1,103	685
Claims settled	76	45	66
Total	1,989	1,148	771

The dispute between the claimant's solicitors and small private mines prevented the Department settling the majority of claims in full, although interim payments were made. Agreement between the parties has now been reached.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many former miners who worked exclusively for the National Coal Board have waited for longer than *(a)* four years, *(b)* three years and *(c)* two years for their respiratory claim to be resolved. [161338]

Nigel Griffiths: I am informed that as of 12 March 2004 the figures are:

	Over four years	*Between three to four years*	*Between two to three years*
Claims outstanding	32,172	18,434	23,555
Claims settled	32,617	20,515	24,163
Total	64,789	38,949	47,718

I urge all solicitors and claims handlers to prioritise cases and also to ensure any delays are avoided in settling claims.

Mobile Phone Tracking

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the implications of services available to employers to track automatically the movements of staff using their mobile phones, with particular reference to the European Commission Directive on Privacy and Electronic Communications. [162622]

Mr. Timms: The Privacy and Electronic Communications Directive (2002/5 8/EC) applies a number of privacy safeguards to value added services based on traffic and location data, including a requirement for informed consent from subscribers or users of the communications service involved, and, in the case of location data services, a requirement that subscribers or users must be able to withdraw their consent on a temporary as well as a long term basis, each time they connect to the network or make a phone call or other form of communication. The Directive was implemented in the UK by the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003, which came into force on 11 December 2003, following public consultation on this and other aspects of the Directive earlier in the year.

The Directive recognises that there needs to be a degree of flexibility in determining whose consent should be obtained in cases where the subscriber to a service is a different person from the user—for instance, where a business subscribes to a mobile phone service on behalf of employees. In their guidance on the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations, the view of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is that in the case of a corporate subscriber, a person holding himself out as capable of making decisions on the part of the company is likely to be able to give consent, unless the communications provider has reasonable grounds to believe otherwise.

This does not remove the need for businesses and other organisations to ensure that they are complying with their own obligations to employees. The ICO have advised us that any use by employers of the data obtained from this kind of system for monitoring purposes must be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and they provide detailed advice in Part 3 of the Employment Practices Data Protection Code, which is specifically concerned with monitoring at work.

Official Engagements (Linlithgow)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what purpose an official of her Department travelled from London to the Linlithgow constituency on 23 February returning on 24 February; what advice the official gave on planning matters; and what contact the official had with Fauldhouse Community Council. [158563]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* I wrote to my hon. Friend on this matter on 14 March 2004. The official concerned visited Linlithgow constituency over the stated period as part of the "week in business" programme, which civil servants in the Department are undertaking to better understand the needs of UK businesses. One of her key developmental objectives whilst visiting WBB Minerals Scottish operations was to gain an understanding of the planning process in relation to her work on industrial minerals. She attended an exhibition in Fauldhouse on 24 February 2004 organised by WBB Minerals at the invitation of the company. She attended purely as an observer and at no point did she try to influence the planning process.

Postwatch/Postwatch Scotland

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what the cost of Postwatch has been in each year since its creation; [161455]

(2) how many staff are employed by Postwatch; [161456]

(3) what the budget of Postwatch Scotland is in 2003–04; [161457]

(4) how many staff are employed by Postwatch Scotland. [161458]

Mr. Timms: The Postal Services Act provided for the establishment of Consumer Council for Postal Services also known as Postwatch to promote the interests of consumers. Postwatch was set up on 1 January 2001; it is made up of a National Council with four national members and representatives from Scotland, Wales Northern Ireland and six English regions each with its own Chair and Regional Committee.

Its budget in the three years since it was set up has been:

	£ million
2001–02	7.89
2002–03	8.19
2003–04	9.904

Postwatch currently has 101 posts in its central office and regions. In some regions rather than employ its own staff, Postwatch outsources to external contractors; this is the case in Scotland where there are five contracted staff. Information on Postwatch budget and staff is published in its Annual Report, copies are made available in the Libraries of the House.

Press Officers

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many press officers were employed in her Department in each year from 1990–91 to 2003–04; what the total cost was in each year; and if she will make a statement. [162853]

Ms Hewitt: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 4 February 2003, *Official Report*, column 180W.

The number of Press Officers employed in DTI on 1 January 2004 was 19. A breakdown of Press Office costs is not held and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* portfolio quotas and *(b)* incentive tariffs are available to encourage greater use and supply of renewable energy in the UK. [162047]

Mr. Timms: The Renewables Obligation, introduced with effect from 1 April 2002, provides a substantial market incentive for all eligible forms of renewable energy.

The Obligation requires licensed electricity suppliers to source specified percentages of the electricity that they supply from renewable sources. The level of the Obligation is set to increase each year from its current level of 4.3 per cent. for 2003–4 to reach 10.4 per cent. for 2010–11. In December, I announced the Government's intention to provide for the level of the Obligation to continue to rise in years beyond 2010–11 so that it would reach 15.4 per cent. for 2015–16.

Before the introduction of the Renewables Obligation, the Government considered the possibility of introducing a banded Obligation, with the buy-out price set at different levels for different renewable sources of energy. This possibility was rejected, as it was judged that it would segment the market unnecessarily, and would lead to the Government dictating the relative importance of each technology.

Failure to reach the specified percentages exposes suppliers to a buy-out price currently set at 3,051 pence per KWh for each unit not sourced from renewables.

It is open to suppliers to offer "green tariffs" of various kinds to their customers, some of which may go beyond the requirements of the Renewables Obligation in terms of support for renewables.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to lower incentives on the *(a)* development, *(b)* sale and *(c)* use of environmentally unfriendly energy technologies. [162048]

Mr. Timms: The department works with others to develop a range of measures designed to disincentivise environmentally unfriendly energy technologies. These include:

regulatory instruments—like the implementation of the Large Combustion Plant Directive;

economic instruments—like the forthcoming EU Emissions Trading Scheme;

the production of guidance—such as the guidance we publish for developers seeking consent for large power stations on the need to consider opportunities for Combined Heat and Power.

In addition, of course, we have developed a wide range of incentives for environmentally friendly sources of energy, for example the Renewables Obligation which provides an incentive for the use of renewable energy sources to generate electricity.

Renewables Obligation Certificates Scheme

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the operation of the Renewables Obligation Certificates scheme. [162954]

Mr. Timms: The Renewables Obligation (RO) will only have been in operation for two years at the end of March 2004. However, in this short period of time it has proved successful in bringing forward new renewables generation and in encouraging investment. More new capacity was installed over this period than in the previous decade, and we remain confident that this support mechanism will help us meet our 2010 renewable energy target.

An initial assessment of the RO came in the form of a technical review shortly after the first year of operation. This was to ensure that the RO was working as first intended and proposed changes to benefit biomass and small generators. Changes to the Obligation resulting from this review and from the 'Late-payments' consultation are currently before Parliament. In February of this year Ofgem also released their review of the RO's first year of operation.

All of this leads into the major review of the RO, which is scheduled for 2005–06.

Taxis

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she expects to publish the Government's response to the Office of Fair Trading Report on the regulation of the taxi trade. [162973]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Mr right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry issued a written statement to Parliament announcing the Government's response to the report on Thursday 18 March 2004.

Tidal Power

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the potential for generating electricity using the tidal power of the Severn estuary; and if she will make a statement. [163114]

Mr. Timms: Between 1978 and 1994 the Government supported a number of studies under its Tidal Energy Research and Development Programme. Those studies included an assessment of the feasibility and financial viability of a Severn barrage scheme.

The Government's Energy White Paper published in February 2003 looked at potential renewable sources of energy, including large scale barrage. It concluded that this type of scheme is very expensive and that any plans for a Severn Barrage would raise strong environmental concerns and as such it would not be fruitful to pursue at this stage.

Wind Farms

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans there are to develop wind farms in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* the North West. [161799]

Mr. Timms: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is only asked to give permission routinely when proposed wind farms have a capacity above 50 MWh. She is currently considering one application for consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to construct a 65 MW windfarm at

Scout Moor, nr Rochdale. She is also considering one application for a 67.5 MW windfarm at Whinash, Tebay, Cumbria.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Carer's Allowance

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in each London borough were receiving carer's allowance in each of the last six years. [157281]

Maria Eagle: The numbers of Carers Allowance recipients from September 2001 to August 2003, the latest available figures, are set out in the tables below. Figures prior to September 2001 are not available.

Carer's Allowance Recipients as at August 2003

	Total
Great Britain	414,240
London GOR	41,695
Inner London—West	4,560
Camden	1,125
City of London	15
Hammersmith and Fulham	740
Kensington and Chelsea	515
Wandsworth	1,175
Westminster	995
Inner London—East	12,745
Hackney	1,560
Haringey	1,300
Islington	1,225
Lambeth	1,160
Lewisham	1,440
Newham	2,365
Southwark	1,535
Tower Hamlets	2,160
Outer London—East and North East	10,570
Barking and Dagenham	1,550
Bexley	1,205
Enfield	1,555
Greenwich	1,660
Havering	1,400
Redbridge	1,555
Waltham Forest	1,645
Outer London—South	4,920
Bromley	1,300
Croydon	1,640
Kingston upon Thames	430
Merton	725
Sutton	825
Outer London—West and North West	8,905
Barnet	1,695
Brent	1,490
Ealing	1,640
Harrow	1,140
Hillingdon	1,275
Hounslow	1,195
Richmond upon Thames	470

Carer's Allowance Recipients as at September 2002

	Total
Great Britain	395,390
London GOR	38,745
Inner London—West	4,080
Camden	980
City of London	15
Hammersmith and Fulham	670
Kensington and Chelsea	455

Carer's Allowance Recipients as at September 2002

	Total
Wandsworth	1,100
Westminster	860
Inner London—East	11,990
Hackney	1,480
Haringey	1,210
Islington	1,140
Lambeth	1,125
Lewisham	1,390
Newham	2,220
Southwark	1,425
Tower Hamlets	2,005
Outer London—East and North East	9,965
Barking and Dagenham	1,450
Bexley	1,145
Enfield	1,455
Greenwich	1,540
Havering	1,370
Redbridge	1,455
Waltham Forest	1,550
Outer London—South	4,545
Bromley	1,185
Croydon	1,510
Kingston upon Thames	410
Merton	660
Sutton	780
Outer London—West and North West	8,165
Barnet	1,545
Brent	1,330
Ealing	1,495
Harrow	1,030
Hillingdon	1,215
Hounslow	1,110
Richmond upon Thames	440

Carer's Allowance Recipients as at September 2001

	Total
Great Britain	379,780
London GOR	36,765
Inner London—West	3,755
Camden	930
City of London	20
Hammersmith and Fulham	610
Kensington and Chelsea	430
Wandsworth	1,065
Westminster	705
Inner London—East	11,365
Hackney	1,380
Haringey	1,160
Islington	1,040
Lambeth	1,055
Lewisham	1,265
Newham	2,165
Southwark	1,365
Tower Hamlets	1,935
Outer London—East and North East	9,600
Barking and Dagenham	1,425
Bexley	1,130
Enfield	1,380
Greenwich	1,460
Havering	1,305
Redbridge	1,415
Waltham Forest	1,485
Outer London—South	4,360
Bromley	1,150
Croydon	1,480
Kingston upon Thames	385
Merton	600
Sutton	750
Outer London—West and North West	7,685
Barnet	1,465
Brent	1,295

Carer's Allowance Recipients as at September 2001

	Total
Eating	1,410
Harrow	955
Hillingdon	1,135
Hounslow	1,030
Richmond upon Thames	400

Source:
IAD Information Centre.
Note:
Figures taken from a 100 per cent. sample at 31 August 2003
Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

Child Support Agency

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many *(a)* Child Support Agency sites, and *(b)* Child Support Agency staff at each, are dealing specifically with clerical cases caused by the new system failures; [160357]

(2) what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the availability of *(a)* trained staff and *(b)* other resources to the Child Support Agency to handle the increase in manual clerical cases due to the failures of the new system. [160358]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 23 March 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary questions about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Child Support Agency sites, and how many Child Support Agency staff at each are dealing specifically with clerical cases caused by the new system failures; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the availability of *(a)* trained staff and *(b)* other resources to the Child Support Agency to handle the increase in manual clerical cases due to the failures of the new system.

I have looked carefully at the number of staff needed to handle cases clerically. Currently 105 staff on two sites at Newcastle and Cumnock are engaged in this work. I keep this under continuous review and will adjust the figure as necessary.

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of people eligible for but not claiming council tax benefit in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* the Highlands and Islands, *(c)* Orkney and *(d)* Shetland. [163309]

Mr. Pond: Information requested is not available. National estimates of take-up of council tax benefit are presented in the DWP report series 'Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up'. Latest estimates relate to financial year 2001–02 and copies of the published report are held in the Library.

Estimates of council tax benefit take-up cover private households in Great Britain; sub-national estimates cannot be reliably produced.

Discretionary Social Fund

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the net budget is for the Discretionary Social Fund for *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06. [162947]

Mr. Pond: The discretionary Social Fund plays an important role in the Government's agenda for tackling poverty and social exclusion by helping the poorest members of society meet the cost of occasional one-off essential items through Community Care Grants, Budgeting Loans and Crisis Loans.

The net discretionary Social Fund budget is £168.2 million for 2004–05 and £178.2 million for 2005–06. A written statement about the gross discretionary Social Fund budget for 2004–05 and its breakdown will be made in due course.

Earnings Disregards

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when earnings disregards for claimants were last reviewed; and what plans he has to increase them. [162572]

Mr. Pond: Income-related benefits are intended to help people whose resources are insufficient to meet their day-to-day living expenses; any income that is available to meet those expenses is normally taken into account. However, as an incentive to those who wish to work part-time, a certain amount of part-time earnings can be disregarded.

All aspects of benefit payment, including these disregards, are kept under review in order to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of benefit and the best use of public funds. Earnings disregards were last increased in April 2001, when a higher rate of £20 was introduced for certain vulnerable groups, including disabled people, lone parents and carers.

Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress the Government has made in developing a Framework for Vocational Rehabilitation, as referred to in the Second Stage Report of the Review of Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance. [162655]

Mr. Browne: Good progress has been made to fulfil the Government's commitment to develop and publish a Framework for Vocational Rehabilitation by late summer 2004. As a next step we intend to consult formally with stakeholders in April.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many new underwriters have *(a)* entered and *(b)* re-established themselves in the market offering employers' liability compulsory insurance over the last five years; and how many underwriters have left the market over the same period. [162660]

Mr. Browne: This information is not collected centrally. It remains the view of the market that capacity for Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance (ELCI) is increasing at a gradual rate.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress the Health and Safety Executive has made in regard to launching a Health and Safety Management Index, as referred to in the Second Stage Report of the Review of Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance. [162656]

Mr. Browne: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has developed a management index to measure the health and safety management performance of large organisations and has placed the index on the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk/research/chaspi.htm for validation. Validation is scheduled to commence in April and to last four months.

In parallel HSE is developing a similar index for small businesses. A validated version is expected in June. Further work will then be required to convert this into a form that is suited to users, for example, insurers and small businesses.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the feasibility of establishing an enforcement database to focus the Health and Safety Executive's enforcement efforts in regard to employers' liability compulsory insurance. [162659]

Mr. Browne: We are re-appraising our approach to an enforcement database in the light of information that the Health and Safety Executive has gathered from 18,000 employers indicating a high level of compliance (over 99 per cent).

In the meantime we are continuing the actions outlined in the second stage report to improve enforcement. These include commitments to prepare and publish new Government procurement guidance to ensure compliance from bodies that contract with the public sector.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to monitor the joint code of practice from the Association of British Insurers and British Insurance Brokers' Association, as referred to in the Second Stage Report of the Review of Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance. [162661]

Mr. Browne: The Association of British Insurers (ABI) and the British Insurance Brokers' Association (BIBA) have been monitoring the implementation of the Statement of Good Practice on renewal of Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance (ELCI) and public liability insurance published on 6 August 2003.

The ABI and BIBA have not received any complaints under the Statement.

In addition the Financial Services Authority (FSA) sent "Good Practice Indicators" to all general Insurance Companies in June 2003 following a project run by the FSA looking at risk management, in writing liability insurance, as part of a Dear CEO (Chief Executive Officer) letter. The indicators included guidance on renewals.

The FSA will look at how companies writing liability insurance are adhering to these indicators as part of the risk assessment process, which takes place annually for the larger firms and possibly every two or three years for smaller firms.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what role information and advice from the Association of British Insurers plays in the development of his Department's policy on employer's liability insurance. [162662]

Mr. Browne: The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has been open and active in its support for the actions mapped out in the Government's Report of the Review of Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance (ELCI).

The Government continues to work with the ABI in the delivery of this agenda as well as drawing on support from other key representative organisations such as the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL), the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF), the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and the Trades Union Congress (TUC).

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what guidance is issued by the Financial Services Authority on good practice indicators to be used in assessing firms writing liability insurance, referred to in the Second Stage Report of the Review of Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance. [162690]

Mr. Browne: The Financial Services Authority (FSA) sent the "Good Practice Indicators" to all General Insurance Companies last June following a project run by the FSA looking at risk management practices within the liability insurance market as part of a Dear CEO (Chief Executive Officer) letter. The indicators were issued to the market to try and raise standards within the market, and did not constitute general guidance. They covered Business Operating Environment and Strategy, Pricing and Reinsurance, Risk Management and Claims Handling. A copy has been placed in the Library.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the effect of the Making the Market Work initiative by the Association of British Insurers in relation to the cost of premiums for employers' liability compulsory insurance. [162691]

Mr. Browne: The Association of British Insurers (ABI) is planning to undertake an evaluation of the initiative after one year of its operation, in Autumn 2004. The Government will take a close interest in the outcome.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many personal injury claims were made to general insurers in specific relation to employers' liability in each of the last five years; what the total value of all costs in relation to such claims was; and what the total value of all settlements in relation to such claims was. [162692]

Mr. Browne: Figures for the number of personal injury claims in relation to Employers' Liability for

1999–2000 are not available. The number of personal injury claims in relation to Employers' Liability for 2001 to 2003 are:

	£
2001	219,183
2002	170,554
2003	183,342

Source:
Compensation Recovery Unit

Separate figures for just the total value of costs and just the total value of settlements are not available. However the total value of costs and claims combined for 1999–2002 were:

	£ million
1999	468
2000	427
2001	639
2002	926

Note:
Figures are not yet available for 2003.
Source:
Association of British Insurers

It is important to note that because of the long tail nature of certain claims, settlements may accrue for many years to come. The figures in the table only relate to the value of claims thus far settled in each of those years.

Lone Parents

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many lone parents in Crosby have gained work through the New Deal programme. [160530]

Mr. Browne: Two hundred and ninty lone parents in Crosby have gained a job through the New Deal for Lone Parents since the start of the programme in October 1998.

National Insurance Pension Benefits

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of state payments to pensioners, including income related benefits, was represented by National Insurance pension benefits, in *(a)* 1983, *(b)* 1993 and *(c)* 2003. [162405]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is given in the table.

Percentage

	1983–84	*1992–93*	*2002–03*
National Insurance pension benefits as a proportion of all benefits paid to people over pension age	83	78	75

Note:
Contributory Benefits include: Retirement Pension basic and additional pension; Widows' and Bereavement Benefits; Christmas Bonus contribution based; Invalidity Benefit basic and additional pension (not included in 2002–03 as benefit ceased in 2000).
Non-Contributory Benefits include non-contributory Retirement Pension; Mobility Allowance (benefit subsumed into Disability Allowance from 1992–93); Attendance Allowance; Disability Living Allowance; Non-Contributory Invalidity Pension/Severe Disablement Allowance; Winter Fuel Payments (payable from 1997–98); Over 75 TV Licence (payable from 2000–01).
Income Related Benefits include: Housing Benefit; Rate Rebate (1983–84)/Community Charge Benefit (1992–93)/ Council Tax Benefit (2002/03); and Supplementary Benefit (1983–84)/Income Support (1992–93)/Minimum Income Guarantee (2002–03). All income-related benefits relate to people aged 60 or over, rather than over pension age.
Major Benefits not included in the calculations are: Industrial Injuries Benefits; Invalid Care Allowance.

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of all pensioner income was represented by National Insurance pension benefits, in *(a)* 1983, *(b)* 1993 and *(c)* 2003. [162406]

Malcolm Wicks: Information for 1983 and 2003 is not available. In 1981 National Insurance pension benefits amounted to 52 per cent. of pensioner gross income. In 1993 this proportion was 43 per cent. National Insurance pension benefits amounted to 39 per cent. of pensioners gross income in 2001–02. National insurance pension benefits have fallen relative to pensioner gross income in the last 20 years mainly because occupational pensions have increased by more than average earnings during this period.

Note:
The information is derived from the Family Expenditure Survey for the years 1981 and 1993 and the Family Resources Survey for the year 2001–02. Data from the FES and FRS should not be directly compared.

New Deal

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of the operation of benefit sanctions for persons participating in the New Deal. [158381]

Mr. Browne: Research that we have conducted into the effects of the imposition of sanctions found that, overall, sanctions do not have a detrimental effect on jobsearch activity, and in many cases resulted in increased effort in actively seeking work.

A copy of the report 'Saunders, T., Stone, V. and Candy, S. (2001): The Impact of the 26 week Sanctioning Regime. Employment Services Report ESR 100', which deals with the effects of the sanctioning regime is available in the Library.

Details of the number of sanctions applied to 18 to 24-year-olds are in the quarterly publication 'Labour Market Statistics—Analysis of Sector Decision Making', a copy of which is in the Library. Separate information is not available on sanctions for New Deal 25 plus participants.

We are continuing to study the effectiveness of benefit sanctions and their effect on individual jobseekers and their families. Work is being undertaken to improve the available statistics, including the development of a sanctions database, with the first results from this are expected later this year.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many jobseeker's allowance claimants have incurred benefit sanctions for failure to participate in the New Deal in each year since the New Deal's inception; and what percentage of persons liable for benefit sanctions that represents. [158421]

Mr. Browne: Within the New Deal programme, benefit sanctions are applied only in connection with the New Deal for Young People and New Deal 25 plus. Information is not available, for sanctions applied to people who refuse to participate in New Deal 25 plus. The available information is in the table.

Numbers of Decisions and Sanctions for Jobseeker's Allowance claimants who refuse to participate in the New Deal for Young People (NDYP)

Year Totals	*Total starts on New Deal for Young People*[1]	*Decisions relating to non-participation in NDYP resulting in a benefit sanction being imposed*[2]	*Decisions relating to non-participation in NDYP resulting in a benefit sanction NOT being applied*[3]	*Percentage of decisions relating to non-participation in NDYP resulting in a benefit sanction being imposed*	*Number of sanctions imposed as a percentage of total starts to NDYP*
1998–99	248,510	3,525	1,601	68.77	1.4
1999–2000	192,530	8,888	3,895	69.53	4.3
2000–01	170,040	8,518	4,372	66.08	4.7
2001–02	160,840	5,953	3,603	62.29	3.5
2002–03	167,370	6,579	3,873	62.94	3.7
2003–04	126,130	4,868	2,462	66.41	3.6
Total	1,065,420	38,450	19,806	66.00	3.4

[1] Some people may have made more than one start on NDYP during the year.
[2] Some people may have been sanctioned more than once during the year.
[3] These figures include cases where the original decision has been revised and allowed completely along with those cases were the initial decision was not to impose a sanction.
[4] Figures are to end December 2003.
Source:
Labour Market Statistics—Analysis of Sector Decision Making.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many women in Crosby have benefited from *(a)* the New Deal for Lone Parents and *(b)* the New Deal for Partners since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [160384]

Mr. Browne: Through the New Deal we have introduced a wide range of initiatives to help individuals improve their employment prospects by giving them the skills, support and confidence they need to move into work. From 12 April we are enhancing New Deal for Partners to offer the same level of help and support as our successful New Deal for Lone Parents programme. From April we shall also start to roll out Work Focused Interviews for Partners, offering greater support to partners of benefit recipients.

Four hundred and sixty women have started New Deal for Lone Parents in Crosby since the beginning of the programme in October 1998, of whom, 280 have gained a job. Information on the number of women in Crosby who have benefited from the New Deal for Partners is not available.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Hackney North and Stoke Newington have benefited from the New Deal for *(a)* young people, *(b)* long-term unemployed and *(c)* lone parents. [162289]

Mr. Browne: The information is in the table.

Numbers into work in Hackney and Stoke Newington through New Deal programmes

Programme	*Numbers into work*
New Deal for Young People	1,630
New Deal 25 plus	2,170
New Deal for Lone Parents	300

Note:
1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10.
2. Information is to the end of December 2003.
Source:
Department for Work and Pensions Information and Analysis Directorate

Pension Entitlements

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the state retirement pension entitlements are of women who are married to younger husbands. [162686]

Malcolm Wicks: A married woman may be entitled to a State Pension in her own right if she has paid enough National Insurance (NI) contributions herself.

However, a married woman can also become entitled to a State Pension based on her husband's contributions but only when they have both reached State Pension age and claim their State Pension.

If she is entitled to a pension in her own right as well as one based on her husband's contributions, she will be paid at the higher rate.

Pensioner Incomes

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will update his estimates based on the Family Resources Survey 2001–02 of *(a)* median pensioner incomes, excluding means-tested benefits, by

(i) age, (ii) sex and (iii) marital status and *(b)* the size of each group, consistent with his Answer of 27 June 2002, *Official Report*, column 1060W. [162649]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is in the table.

	Age 60–64	*Age 65–69*	*Age 70–74*	*Age 75–79*	*Age 80+*
Single males					
Median income (£)	n/a	161	155	145	135
Number	n/a	230,000	260,000	250,000	310,000
Single females					
Median income (£)	137	142	125	118	117
Number	410,000	480,000	600,000	640,000	950,000
Couples					
Median income (£)	n/a	309	264	241	224
Number	n/a	990,000	800,000	550,000	390,000

Notes:
1. The definition of income used here is gross income that is income gross of the following items: income tax payments, national insurance contributions, contributions to occupational and personal pension schemes, local taxes, maintenance, child support payments ands parental contributions to students living away from home.
2. "Median income" represents the income of the person or family exactly in the middle of the range of ranked incomes of the age group. For each age group there is a wide range of incomes.
3. The data from the Family Resources Survey 2001–02 are rounded to the nearest £1 are 10,000, money amounts are expressed in 2001–02 prices to be consistent with latest published pensioners' income series.
4. These estimates are based on a small sample size and comparisons with 2000–01 figures given in the previous answer should therefore be made with caution.
5. Pensioner units are allocated to age categories according to the age of the head of the unit.
6. Estimates have not been split by gender for couples as the extent of income sharing within pensioner units is unknown.
7. Means tested benefits refer to minimum income guarantee, working families tax credit, housing benefit and social fund grants.
8. These results are based on survey respondents' identification of different elements of benefit income and are therefore subject to misreporting.
9. The pensioners income series 2002–03 will be published in May 2004 which will update these figures.

Pensions

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what research his Department has *(a)* carried out and *(b)* commissioned into the benefits of (i) compulsory and (ii) opt-out pension scheme membership for employees. [161206]

Malcolm Wicks: We have established the independent Pensions Commission to monitor and keep under review the voluntary system of private pensions and long term savings. Its interim report, which will describe in detail the present situation, current trends, and the challenges to be met, will be published in September. Their first full report, expected in mid 2005, will include recommendations as to whether there is a case to move beyond the current voluntary system.

International research suggests that automatic enrolment, where new employees automatically become members of their employer's pension scheme unless they choose to opt-out, is a very effective tool for increasing pension scheme membership for employees. Over the next year we aim to research the effectiveness of this approach in delivering increased pension savings in the UK.

Worktrain Scheme

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have *(a)* found employment and *(b)* enrolled on training courses through the Worktrain scheme online in each year since the service became available. [158013]

Mr. Browne: The requested information is not available.

Worktrain is an internet service for people looking for information on job vacancies, training courses, careers, childcare providers and voluntary opportunities. It is a popular service and is one of the most used government websites. It currently receives around 250,000 visitors a month. The website offers users access to the Jobcentre Plus database of 400,000 job vacancies and the learndirect database of 500,000 training opportunities.

It is not possible for the Worktrain service to track if visitors to the site have been successful in finding a job or enrolling on a training course. An online questionnaire asks visitors if they have applied for job vacancies or training courses as a result of using the site. In 2002–03, 68 per cent. of repeat visitors who replied to the questionnaire had applied for a job and 12 per cent. applied for a training course.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Bodies/Associations

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost to public funds, including staff, is of the *(a)* Great Britain-China Centre, *(b)* British Association for Central and Eastern Europe and *(c)* Britain-Russia Centre in the current financial year; and when the cost of each will next be reviewed. [162733]

Mr. Straw: Budgets for 2003–04 are:

	£
(a) Great Britain-China Centre	300,000
(b) British Association for Central and Eastern Europe	252,000
(c) British-Russia Centre	70,000

The next reviews are scheduled to take place in 2006. The budgets for 2004–05 will remain the same as this year.

Cameroon/Nigeria

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what support he intends to provide in the delineation of the Cameroon/Nigeria border. [161225]

Mr. Mullin: We welcome the efforts of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, supported by Cameroon and Nigeria, to take forward the 2002 International Court of Justice ruling on the border between Cameroon and Nigeria. HMG is actively considering a contribution to the present demarcation exercise.

European Radio Asia

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will raise with his EU counterparts the possible establishment of a European Radio Asia to broadcast to North Korea, China, Tibet and Burma. [161496]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I have no plans at present to raise with EU partners the establishment of a European Radio Asia.

Radio broadcasters in the UK and other EU Member States already transmit programmes into Asia, notably the BBC World Service.

Guantanamo Bay Detainees

Mr Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance the Government will afford to UK nationals formerly detained in Guantanamo Bay who have since been freed without charge in the UK to obtain redress and compensation from the US Administration; and if he will make a statement. [162067]

Mr. Mullin: I am aware of reports that the British nationals recently released from Guantanamo Bay may be intending to seek redress and compensation from the US Administration. The question of how they proceed, and whether they pursue legal action, is a matter for the men and their legal representatives.

Kosovo

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in *(a)* Kosovo and *(b)* Serbia and Montenegro. [163257]

Mr. MacShane: The situation in Kosovo is calm but tense. It is important now that the leaders in Pristina and Belgrade work with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and Kosovo Force (KFOR) to ensure that there is no repetition of last week's violence. Inter-ethnic violence is not acceptable and the perpetrators of these criminal acts must be brought to justice. We will continue to work for a stable, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo. UNMIK and KFOR will have our complete support in working towards this end.

There were demonstrations in Belgrade and Nis in Southern Serbia following the outbreak of violence in Kosovo. But the situation is now calm. The situation in Montenegro remained calm throughout.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is on the final determination of the status of Kosovo; and if he will make a statement. [163258]

Mr. MacShane: Our policy is based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) and the formal review process of standards as endorsed by the UN in December 2003. The UK, with the rest of the international community, will work with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, Kosovo Force and the local authorities to ensure a stable, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* meetings have been held and *(b)* initiatives have been undertaken by (i) NATO, (ii) the EU and (iii) the United Kingdom bilaterally to achieve a settlement in Kosovo in the past two years, broken down by date; and if he will make a statement. [163259]

Mr. MacShane: There have been constant discussions formally and informally in Nato, EU and bilaterally on Kosovo. I take every opportunity on visits to the region or in meetings with relevant partners in the UK or elsewhere in Europe to keep UK and international policy on Kosovo under review. My most recent discussions with Kosovan leaders took place at the recent funeral of President Trajkovski of Macedonia. I will be visiting Pristina and Belgrade again next month for further talks on finding a solution to the Kosovo question. My officials play a leading role in shaping the EU-Nato policy towards Kosovo based on the need for Kosovans to abide by international legal and human rights norms.

Laos

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on relations between the United Kingdom and Laos. [156237]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Our relations with Laos are not extensive. There is only modest trade between the two countries, and our contacts with the Lao Government are limited. We are keen to see the development of democracy and of the economy in Laos and, in particular, improvements in its human rights performance.

We do not have an Embassy in Laos. Our Embassy in Bangkok is accredited to Laos, and Embassy staff visit periodically and monitor major developments there, including the human rights situation. Around 20,000 British nationals visit Laos each year. Consular facilities are kindly provided by the Australian Embassy in Vientiane.

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Laos Government regarding the treatment of Christians. [156238]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We are aware of reports of the mistreatment of Christians in Laos. Our Embassy in Bangkok (which is accredited to Laos) monitors the situation.

Our contacts with the Laos Government are limited, but we have raised our human rights concerns on a number of occasions either in bilateral contacts or through the European Union. Most recently, for example, in January the Deputy Head of Mission at our Embassy in Bangkok raised human rights and the persecution of Christians with HE Madam Khempheng Pholsena, the Lao Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Promotion of human rights, including freedom of thought, conscience and religion, is at the heart of our foreign policy. We condemn instances where individuals are persecuted because of their faith or belief, wherever they happen and whatever the religion of the individual or group concerned.

We will continue to raise our concerns with the Lao authorities when opportunities arise.

Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the overall annual cost to public funds has been, including the 2.5 staff cited in the Cabinet Office publication, Public Bodies 2003, of the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission; and when spending on it will next be reviewed. [162732]

Mr. Straw: The overall annual cost of the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission in the current financial year is £1,966,500. This budget is reviewed annually. The budget for 2004–05 will be £2,083,784.

McCann v. United Kingdom

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what changes have been made to the records of the Gibraltar Coroner following the European Court of Human Rights judgment in McCann v. United Kingdom. [162065]

Mr. MacShane: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to him by the then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the late Derek Fatchett, on 10 February 1998, *Official Report*, col. 114. No changes have been made to the records of the Gibraltar coroner following this judgement.

Mr. Maajid Nawaz

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government has made to the Egyptian Government since 13 January regarding Mr. Maajid Nawaz. [163254]

Mr. Mullin: I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's answer of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 49–50W. The British Ambassador in Cairo raised our concerns about this case with the Egyptian Foreign Minister on 15 January, one of many representations we have made to the Egyptian authorities since Mr. Nawas was first detained. The case was also raised with Egyptian Government officials on 7 March.

Secondees

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the secondees from outside organisations working in his Department, stating in each case *(a)* the name of the person, *(b)* the name of the organisation, *(c)* the post held and *(d)* the start and finish dates of the secondment; and which are involved in drafting parliamentary answers. [160601]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 11 March 2004]*: The list of secondees from outside organisations working in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are detailed in the following table.

Name	*Company*	*Start*	*Finish*	*Job title*	*Involved in drafting Parliamentary answers*
Bakhshi Hasan	Bank of England	30 June 2003	30 June 2005	Deputy Head Economic Policy Department.	Yes
Baldwin Alan	BT	26 September 1999	29 May 2004	Telecoms consultant (UK Trade and Investment London)	No
Ball Alexandra	One North East	31 January 2004	30 April 2004	Middle Manager Commercial Team-Chongqing	No
Donougher Mark	PWC	27 March 2002	26 March 2004	Middle Manger Global Entrepreneur Programme (UK Trade and Investment London)	No
Hinde Julia	Michael John Trust	1 December 2001	31 May 2006	First Secretary Science and Technology Ottawa	No
O'Keeffe Phil	AMEC	27 November 2003	27 May 2004	Middle Manager British Office Baghdad	No
Porter Dr. Robin	KGP	13 May 2002	13 January 2006	Science and Technology Counsellor Beijing	No
Sands Nigel	Invest Northern Ireland	30 October 2003	29 May 2004	Middle Manger Commercial Los Anseles	No
Adams Lew	Strategic Rail Authority	1 April 2002	31 March 2004	Export—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Alien Martyn	BAE Systems	4 February 2002	3 February 2005	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Bassnett Fred	Raylian London Limited	25 April 2000	24 April 2004	Export Promoter (UK Trade and Investment)	No
David Bill	Balfour Beatty Rail Limited	1 January 2002	31 December 2004	Export Promoter (UK Trade and Investment)	No
Boswell Debbie	British Jewellery and Giftware Federation	15 July 2003	14 July 2005	Export Promoter (UK Trade and Investment	No
Bowles Edwin	Exploration Consultants Limited	2 January 2002	31 March 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Chapman Jeff Dr.	Combined Heat and Power Assoc.	1 April 2000	31 March 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Churchward Jennifer	Ernst and Young	3 February 2003	2 February 2005	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Crooks Hugh	RASE	5 November 2001	28 February 2006	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Ernes Tony	Mott Macdonald Group Ltd.	1 June 1999	31 May-2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Fawcett Paul	HSBC Bank plc	1 September 2003	31 August 2005	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No

Name	Company	Start	Finish	Job title	Involved in drafting Parliamentary answers
Fitton John	Foster Wheeler Energy Ltd.	10 April 2000	2 July 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Franceschi Christian (Chris)	DSL Consultants Limited	18 November 2002	19 November 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Holt Mark	Business Link Cheshire and Warrington	18 June 2002	17 June 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Hudson Robert	Hyder Consulting	1 September 2001	31 August 2005	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Ireland John	British Nuclear Fuels	1 September 1999	31 August 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Jones Alexia	Deluca	2 September 2002	31 March 2005	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment-)	No
McArthur Alan	Middlesbrough College	27 May 2003	26 May 2005	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
MacKeown Tom	Bertrams	1 March 2003	26 February 2005	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Pascoe Richard	Reuters Limited	9 December 2002	9 June 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Patterson Philip	Association of Independent Music Ltd.	22 April 2003	22 October 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Nick Peace	The Newbrook Engineering Company	24 May 1999	31 May 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Scott Alison	Gardenex	1 December 1999	31 March 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Skinner Martyn	Tate and Lyle pic	10 April 2000	9 April 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Sloane Robin	Ova Arup	8 April 2002	9 April 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Somers Jackie	Traditional Weatherwear Limited	2 May 2000	1 May 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Speyr von John	DSL Consultants Limited	1 Oct 2002	30 September 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Vaidya Anil	Goldshield Pharmaceuticals Ltd	1 March 2000	28 March 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Vimpany John	Exhibition Consultants Ltd	1 September 2003	31 August 2005	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Waters David	AMEC	2 April 2001	1 April 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Watford Peter	Commonwealth Business Council	1 October 2002	31 August 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Williams David	Gilbert Gilkes and Gordon	7 August 2000	6 August 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Wilson Barbara	Corgi Hosiery Limited	1 September 2001	31 August 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Wilson Ed	Waterkubj (UK) Ltd.—Vexamus Water Ltd.	2 September 2002	1 September 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Wilson Graham	AMEC Plc	3 January 2004	2 January 2006	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Wright Gordon	BAE Systems plc	21 July 2003	20 July 2005	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No
Woodhouse Tony	GKN plc	1 June 1999	31 May 2004	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)	No

While on secondment, secondees are subject to Civil Service terms and conditions, and are expected to undertake the full range of duties attached to the post, including the provision of drafts for parliamentary questions if required.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he intends to publish the draft Belfast metropolitan area plan. [162698]

Angela Smith: The publication date for the plan has not been finalised. The programme is currently being reviewed to ensure publication at the earliest possible date

Census Records

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the financial consequences of establishing a new *(a)* 80 and *(b)* 90-year closure period for decennial population census records for Northern Ireland. [160429]

Mr. Pearson: No assessment has been made of the financial consequences of an 80 or 90-year closure period for decennial censuses. Censuses in 1901 and 1911 were conducted on an all-Ireland basis. These records are available in the National Archives, Dublin. The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has microfilm of the 1901 census and intends to obtain the same for 1911. For the 1926 and later censuses conducted in Northern Ireland, the Census Act (Northern Ireland) 1969 stipulates that it is an offence to disclose personal census information without lawful authority. Officials consider that at an appropriate time the Government should consider introducing legislation to prescribe a closure period for Northern Ireland census records that is in line with the rest of the United Kingdom, where a 100-year closure period pertains.

Dentistry

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of *(a)* two-year-olds and *(b)* three to five year-olds are registered with general dental practitioners, broken down by health board. [162721]

Angela Smith: Information on the percentage of *(a)* two-year-olds and *(b)* three to five-year-olds who are registered with general dental practitioners, broken down by health board is as follows.

Children registered with General Dental Practitioners[1]—March 2004

	Two-year-olds	*Three to five-year-olds*	*Under three years*
Eastern Board			
Number registered	3,242	15,053	5,790
2002 MYE[2]	8,086	25,962	23,794
Proportion registered (%)	40.1	58.0	24.3
Northern Board			
Number registered	2,259	11,201	3,996
2002 MYE[2]	5,709	17,888	16,461
Proportion registered (%)	39.6	62.6	24.3
Southern Board			
Number registered	1,819	8,729	3,075
2002 MYE[2]	4,534	14,288	13,395
Proportion registered (%)	40.1	61.1	23.0
Western Board			
Number registered	1,493	7,379	2,475
2002 MYE[2]	4,059	13,215	11,900
Proportion registered (%)	36.8	55.8	20.8
Northern Ireland[3]			
Number registered	8,861	42,588	15,416
2002 MYE[2]	22,388	71,353	65,550
Proportion registered (%)	39.6	59.7	23.5

[1] Source:
Central Services Agency
[2] Mid Year Estimates—Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
[3] The total number registered for Northern Ireland includes a small number of children in each age band who could not be allocated to a specific Health and Social Services Board

Road Safety

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many driving misdemeanours were dealt with by the Police Service of Northern Ireland from March 2003 to February 2004, broken down by *(a)* parliamentary constituency and *(b)* council area. [160322]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not recorded by parliamentary constituency. The table sets out the number of driving offence detections dealt with by police in 2003 (calendar year), by council area.

District councils	*Detections*
Antrim	4,720
Ards	3,535
Belfast	38,922
Carrickfergus	1,189
Castlereagh	4,249
Larne	1,052
Lisburn	5,833
Newtownabbey	4,127
North Down	3,170
Urban Region	66,797
Armagh	2,748
Ballymena	6,202
Ballymoney	2,013
Banbridge	3,707
Coleraine	3,083
Cookstown	1,469
Craigavon	7,931
Down	3,286
Dungannon and St	3,337
Fermanagh	4,062
Foyle	9,009
Limavady	2,184
Magherafelt	2,014
Moyle	207
Newry and Mourne	4,369
Omagh	3,983
Strabane	1,564
Rural Region	61,168

End-of-life Vehicle Directive

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the implications of the End-of-Life Vehicle Regulations 2003 for Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [162728]

Angela Smith: The Department of the Environment has assessed the implications of the End of Life Vehicles Regulations 2003. Regulatory impact assessments were included in the documents "Consultation on the Transposition of Articles 4,5, 8 and 9 and Annex 2 of the End of Life Vehicles Directive (2000/53/EC)—The End of Life Vehicles Regulations 2003" and "Consultation on the Transposition of Article 6 and Annex 1 of the End of Life Vehicles Directive (2000/53/EC)-Proposals for Regulations".

Copies of these papers have been placed in the Library.

Essential Skills Strategy

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in achieving the targets set in the Essential Skills Strategy; and if he will make a statement. [160990]

Jane Kennedy: The Essential Skills Strategy set a target of supporting 25,000 learners by March 2005.

The Department has made good progress against the target with 6,500 learners supported between April 2002 and March 2003 and a further 8,000 to be supported by 31 March 2004.

Futurebuilders Fund

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what arrangements have been made to establish a Futurebuilders Fund, similar to that in England, for the voluntary and community sectors in Northern Ireland. [162701]

Mr. Spellar: The announcement of the Futurebuilders Fund in England resulted in a consequential allocation to Northern Ireland. Such consequentials arising from allocations to programmes in England are not hypothecated to similar issues in Northern Ireland and the resources can be used to address local needs and priorities. Work is ongoing to develop proposals on how the resources might best be used to support the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland.

Gocean Development

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when a decision on the proposed £35 million development at Gocean, Killyleagh will be made; and if he will make a statement. [162919]

Angela Smith: I intend to make a decision on this proposed development shortly.

Hospital Beds (Psychiatric Patients)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many bed spaces are available in Northern Ireland for psychiatric patients; and if he will list the locations of these beds. [163217]

Angela Smith: The average numbers of available beds by hospital in the Mental Health Programme of Care are as follows.

Average number of available beds in the Mental Health Programme of Care by hospital, 2002–03

Hospital	*Average available beds*
St. Lukes	183.2
Windsor House	35.7
Causeway	31.1
Craigavon Psychiatric Nursing Unit	80.0
Downshire	122.0
Lagan Valley Psychiatric Nursing Unit	25.0
Gransha	70.0
Forster Green	20.0
Holywell	212.1
Whiteabbey Psychiatric Nursing Unit	19.0
Mater Infirmorum	58.6
Knockbracken Healthcare Park	153.0
Shaftesbury Square	18.8
Young Peoples Centre	10.5
Tyrone and Fermanagh	158.6
Ards	25.0
Northern Ireland	1,222.6

Land Use (Dundonald)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether land owned by a subsidiary of TK-ECC in Dundonald will remain zoned for industrial use only if put on the open market. [162922]

Angela Smith: I can confirm that the land in question will be retained as "existing employment/industry" in the Draft Belfast metropolitan area plan 2015.

Patient Exemption Fraud

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how far targets for the reduction of patient exemption fraud have been realised for each Northern Ireland Health Board area; and what targets have been put in place for the period beyond March. [162722]

Angela Smith: The target for the reduction of patient exemption fraud is set at Northern Ireland, rather than at an individual Health Board, level.

My 2004–05 Priorities for Action sets a Northern Ireland target for patient fraud exemption of a 45 per cent. reduction from the 1999–2000 level by 31 March 2005.

My Department remains committed to the achievement of this target.

Police

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers there were in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [160479]

Jane Kennedy: The figures requested are as follows.

	Regular[1]	*Full Time Reserve*	*Part Time Reserve*
1997	8,423	2,929	1,473
1998	8,485	2,982	1,324
1999	8,496	2,862	1,217
2000	8,393	2,688	1,152
2001	7,810	2,496	1,073
2002	6,976	2,184	1,001
2003	6,994	1,860	951
2004	7,319	1,640	868

[1] The numbers of regular officers illustrated in the table does not include student officers.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints have been made against the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland in each year since its formation. [161293]

Jane Kennedy: The Ombudsman's Office advises that a Satisfaction Policy, Procedure and Complaints register was established in 2002. In the reporting year ending 31 March 2003 (the first full year of the register), 22 complaints were received and in the current year to date, 12 complaints have been received.

Prisons

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many suicides took place in prisons in Northern Ireland in 2003; and what steps have been taken to eliminate the risk of suicide in prisons in Northern Ireland. [162143]

Jane Kennedy: There was a total of three suicides in Northern Ireland prisons in 2003. The Northern Ireland Prison Service has been reviewing its procedures in an effort to reduce the number of incidences of self-harm and suicide. A new policy entitled "Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Management" will be implemented on 29 March 2003.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures have been put in place to assess vulnerable inmates in prisons in Northern Ireland who are at risk of suicide; and what measures he is taking to protect those who have been assessed as being at risk of suicide in prison. [162144]

Jane Kennedy: Every prisoner on first committal to prison is examined by a member of the health care staff who will carry out an initial assessment of the possibility that they are at risk of self-harm or suicide. If the health care staff member has concerns about the prisoner, they will either formally notify the senior officers managing the House in which the prisoner is placed or alternatively will immediately place the prisoner in the Healthcare Unit. If the prisoner is located in a House one of the senior officers will immediately interview the

prisoner. In Maghaberry Prison, each House also has an individual nurse officer allocated to it and the nurse will be involved in the on-going support for the prisoner. In either case, a medical officer will then examine the prisoner at the first available opportunity when a care plan will be prepared.

On a day-to-day basis, there is a formal procedure by which any member of staff, who is concerned that a prisoner is at risk of self-harm or suicide, can initiate an assessment. All prison staff are involved in providing support to prisoners who are deemed to be at risk. Health care support is provided through full-time and part-time medical officers, general practitioners, consultant forensic psychiatrists, specialist registrars in mental health and health care staff—a large number of whom have nurse qualifications with a significant proportion having a mental health qualification.

Road Taxes

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much revenue was raised from *(a)* road tax licences and *(b)* road fuel tax in Northern Ireland in each of the last two years. [162668]

Angela Smith: The revenue raised in Northern Ireland from road tax licences for the calendar year 2002 was £112,800,934 and for 2003, £124,646,824.

Road fuel tax is collected on a United Kingdom wide basis and separate figures are not available for Northern Ireland.

Security Costs

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of how security costs have changed since the Northern Ireland peace process began. [154840]

Jane Kennedy: There have been many positive changes to security since the peace process began ranging from reductions in army bases to changes associated with implementing the Patten report on policing. Given the wide range of such changes it would be difficult to determine security savings without a significant costing exercise that would incur disproportionate cost.

Speaker's Office

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of the Speaker's Office in the Northern Ireland Assembly has been since 1998. [160613]

Mr. Spellar: Expenditure on the Office of the Speaker from 1 April 1999 to 29 February 2004 is £834,666 for staff costs and £108,266 for general administration costs. Figures prior to 1 April 1999 are not available as the then New Northern Ireland Assembly was developing its financial systems and expenditure could not be identified against specific cost centres.

Terrorism

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the terrorist *(a)* actions, *(b)* beatings and *(c)* abductions in Northern Ireland since 1 January; and to which terrorist group the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland has attributed responsibility in each case. [161342]

Jane Kennedy: The following table provides details of paramilitary activity since 1 January this year attributed to Loyalist and Republican groups. It is not possible to give an accurate assessment of the number of abductions as often victims of such crime do not co-operate with the police. The Chief Constable has stated publicly that he believes persons connected with the Provisional IRA were involved in the abduction of a male in Belfast earlier this month.

Security Situation Statistics for Northern Ireland 1 January—29 February 2004

	Perceived Attribution[1]	
	By Loyalist	*By Republican*
Number of deaths[2]	—	—
Number of shooting incidents[3]	22	15
Number of bombing incidents[4]	2	3
Casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults	13	10
Casualties as a result of paramilitary shootings	22	11

[1] Attribution is as perceived by the PSNI based on the information available

[2] Includes all deaths due to the security situation

[3] The following types of incidents are included:
Shots fired by terrorists
Paramilitary-style attacks involving shootings
Shots heard (and later confirmed)
Other violent incidents where shots are fired (eg armed robbery)

[4] An individual bombing incident may involve one or more explosive devices. Incidents recorded include explosions and defusings. Incidents involving hoax devices, petrol bombings or incendiaries are excluded.

Statistics are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people there are on the mainland UK exiled from Northern Ireland because of threats from terrorist organisations; and what the cost is to public funds in 2003–04 of such people. [155648]

Angela Smith: There are no official figures on the number of people exiled from Northern Ireland as a result of paramilitary intimidation as not all incidents are reported. The needs of exiles are examined in detail in the Legacy Report, an independent needs analysis of victims of the Troubles living in Great Britain. One of the major contributors to this research was Maranatha, a Christian community that has considerable experience in this area. Maranatha estimates that around four people per month are exiled from Northern Ireland to Great Britain.

Assistance to exiles is provided across a number of agencies both statutory and voluntary. However, in the absence of official figures, it is not possible to quantify the cost to public funds.

Waste Management

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures are in place in Northern Ireland to ensure compliance with the EU Directive regarding the disposal of fridges and freezers; and if he will make a statement. [162693]

Angela Smith: The Department of the Environment has been working in partnership with District Councils in Northern Ireland to put in place a contract to dispose of waste fridges and freezers collected from Council civic amenity sites.

The contractor operates a fully licensed facility in Great Britain, where the waste units are demanufactured, removing and destroying the ozone depleting substances they contain, in line with the requirements of the EU Regulation, while recycling almost all of the remainder of the constituent parts.

The use of a smart tagging system, together with independent monthly checks on the amount of ODS recovered; provide an end-to-end audit trail to demonstrate full compliance with the EU Regulation.

All the Councils in Northern Ireland have signed up to the contract and work has begun on removing the backlog of waste units.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps have been taken to implement waste management plans in Northern Ireland, broken down by each area; and if he will make a statement [162694]

Angela Smith: The three District Council Waste Management Partnership Groups (arc 21, Swamp and North West Region Waste Management Group) have prepared Implementation Action Plans (IAPs), which have been submitted to the Department of the Environment. These Plans detail the steps and expenditure required to implement the Waste Management Plan for each group. The Department has provided guidance to the District Councils on Key Performance Indicators to monitor progress towards the key targets identified in the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy. The IAPs are the subject of ongoing review to ensure that appropriate measures are implemented to meet these key targets.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Members' Staff (Pensions)

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Leader of the House (1) how many hon. Members' staff have yet to be notified of an adjudication by ProAct, on behalf of the House's Department of Finance and Administration, that a decision has been made regarding the recipient pension scheme of their entitled pension contribution; [160756]

(2) what arrangements are being made by the Department of Finance and Administration in the House to assist those hon. Members' staff who wish to transfer their accumulated fund from the Portcullis Pension Plan to another pension provider on an annual basis; [160757]

(3) how many adjudications of hon. Members' staff pension arrangements have been made by ProAct in favour of their existing arrangements rather than the Portcullis Pension Plan; [160758]

(4) how many hon. Members' staff have had their pension arrangements changed by the Department of Finance and Administration via the default arrangements recommended by ProAct; [160759]

(5) how many weeks' notice will be given to hon. Members' staff of any changes to their existing pension arrangements, as adjudicated by ProAct, before the Department of Finance and Administration ceases to honour the existing arrangements; [160760]

(6) how many adjudications of hon. Members' staff pensions have yet to be decided upon by ProAct on behalf of the Department of Finance and Administration; [160761]

(7) when he expects the adjudication process of hon. Members' staff pensions, by ProAct on behalf of the Department of Finance and Administration to be completed; [160762]

(8) how many hon. Members' staff registered a preference to remain with their existing pension provider. [160763]

Mr. Hain: The information requested is as follows, and is based on 16 March 2004.

ProAct are the Independent Financial Advisers who have been assisting the Speaker and the advisory Committee on Members Estimate (formerly known as the Speaker's Advisory Panel) with the setting-up of the Portcullis Pension Plan (the plan).

They provide an impartial professional assessment, in accordance with regulatory guidelines, of whether an individual would be better off remaining in their current pension arrangement, or having future contributions paid to the plan.

The Department of Finance & Administration are responsible for implementing the advice given by ProAct to the House.

I am delighted to confirm that the introduction of the plan (a group stakeholder arrangement) has seen take-up for the 10 per cent. pension supplement move from 49 per cent. as at February 2003 to a nigh-on 100 per cent. take-up rate as of 16 March.

I would like to thank ProAct Financial Planning, CMS Cameron McKenna and members of the Department of Finance & Administration for all their efforts and assistance in helping this major project reach such a highly successful conclusion.

The right hon. Member will be aware that all Members were advised a full year ago of the proposals, by e-mail and in hard copy, and were sent questionnaires to give to their staff for forwarding to current pension providers and/or professional advisers. Staff who are on e-mail were similarly advised at the same time. It was not possible to write to home addresses at that time because the Payroll System then in place could not generate individual address labels. This has since been rectified.

A deadline of October 2003 was given originally, but this was subsequently extended to 31 March 2004. Relevant information was circulated to all Members and to home addresses of employees during September and October 2003. It was made clear that 31 March 2004 was the final deadline, although changes will not be effective until April's payroll run two weeks later. There are no plans to extend this again. Members' staff have already had 12 months in which to submit their questionnaires, and ProAct have dealt with these in a commendably prompt and efficient manner.

However, an exception will be made where employees submitted questionnaires in good time but ProAct will be unable to complete the assessment by the deadline because the further information they require was not supplied in a timely fashion by the current pension provider.

Members' staff have been advised by ProAct of the outcome of every questionnaire where the assessment has been finalised. In 49 cases, further information has been sought from the current pension provider. Final answers cannot be given until the relevant further information has been supplied to and assessed by ProAct.

ProAct have now confirmed that all Members and their employees, who have requested a "memory prompt" will be sent an annual e-mail by ProAct. This reminder will be sent out at a time when the House is sitting (on or around 31 January each year), thus ensuring that employees should be around to act on it and consider whether to top up their pension before the end of the tax year, if they wish to do so.

For 2004–05 only, the reminder will be sent at the beginning of December 2004 to give any employee wishing to use "carry back" time to pay a contribution before this facility is abolished on 31 January 2005.

Contributions for at least 131 staff of Members will (if the employee so wishes) continue to be paid to current arrangements. At least 131 staff wish to have contributions made to their pre-Portcullis pension arrangement. This includes employees who: are currently contributing to a pension arrangement that has terms that, when assessed in accordance with regulatory guidelines, are at least as good as those offered by the plan—only 30 employees fall into this category; are currently contributing to a pension arrangement that cannot accept transfers from the plan—certain cases, detailed in a letter to all Members and their employees on 16 March 2004, are being revisited now that current pension providers/advisers have admitted they gave incorrect or incomplete information in respect of the ability to make annual transfers from the plan to the current pension arrangement, so the number in this group may increase; were born on or before 1 October 1946 (this is based on reaching the age of 60 by the latest possible date for the next general election, plus four months for any "handover") and who have confirmed that they expect to retire at the next general election. Employees in the latter category had a free choice as to whether they wished future contributions to be paid to the plan or their current pension arrangement, and as such their position was not necessarily assessed by ProAct

Furthermore, many people who already had pension arrangements before the plan was introduced are now having future contributions paid to the plan. They now have the benefit of much more flexible contract terms—in particular, lower charges, thus increasing the amount of cash available for investment towards their retirement. Proper regard has been taken of those who may wish to keep their existing pension arrangements going, especially those who are very close to retirement.

In addition, the majority of employees of hon. Members now have death in service cover of twice basic pay. For some time there has been considerable interest in such a benefit, particularly from employees with young families, and we are very pleased that this arrangement is now in place.

Of the 275 questionnaires received, ProAct have recommended that 175 employees should have future contributions paid to the plan. It is entirely up to the employee as to whether the default option comes into play. They are fully entitled to choose whether their funds are invested wholly with AXA or Norwich Union, or split (as the employee directs) between the two. The employee is also able to stipulate that funds other than the default funds should be used. If the employee later changes their mind, they can switch between AXA and Norwich Union, and also invest in different funds with these two insurers.

ProAct currently have 49 questionnaires to assess. This does not represent any tardiness on their part. The apparent delay is because ProAct have felt unable to complete their impartial assessment without seeking further information from the current pension provider.

As advised to Members and their employees, subject to ProAct receiving all outstanding information, the deadline is 31 March 2004. However, an exception will be made where employees submitted questionnaires in good time but ProAct will be unable to complete the assessment by the deadline because the further information they require was not supplied in a timely fashion by the current pension provider.

ProAct is currently contacting or recontacting all the personal providers to whom contributions were being paid until the advent of the plan. If any of the providers are found to have given incomplete or misleading information about annual transfers, and such transfers are not in fact possible, the individuals concerned will be offered the chance to have future contributions paid to their current arrangement. Accordingly, this number may increase.

Some staff initially indicated that they would like to stay with their previous pension arrangements, but when they understood the true costs and charges associated with these older style contracts, the majority were grateful for ProAct's helpful responses and were content to join the plan.

A small number of staff would still prefer to remain in their previous arrangement, but it would be misleading to suggest that this number can be precisely quantified.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Domestic Violence

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Minister for Women how many reported incidents of domestic violence there were in the Vale of York on 1 January; and if she will make a statement. [156468]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

Domestic violence is not separately identified in the recorded crime statistics collected by the Home Office or in the statistics of court proceedings. However, the British Crime Survey (BCS) routinely collects data on the prevalence and number of incidents of domestic

violence in England and Wales from the main "face-to-face" part of the survey. In the 2002–03 BCS, the rate of domestic violence in England and Wales as a whole was 120 per 10,000 adults, and 113 in Yorkshire and Humberside. The BCS is unable to provide domestic violence data at more local levels.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the potential use of Government-owned sites in Fareham for affordable housing. [162987]

Keith Hill: The Government wishes to see better use made of all surplus public sector land, including any in Fareham, which includes the provision of more affordable housing. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's progress report on delivering the Government's sustainable communities programme (July 2003) set out the importance attached to this policy and the new arrangements being established for dealing with disposals of such land.

Tom Brake: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what investment his Department *(a)* has allocated and *(b)* plans to allocate to increase the supply of affordable housing in Sutton in each year since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [162832]

Keith Hill: The funding for provision of new affordable housing in Sutton in the period 1997–98 to 2003–04 is tabled as follows. (ADP is investing in housing through Housing Corporation.) Allocations for 2004–05 and 2005–06 will be announced shortly.

£ million

	Approved development programme	*Local authority social housing grant*
1997–98	2.0	0.8
1998–99	1.8	0.6
1999–2000	2.6	2.2
2000–01	4.9	3.2
2001–02	4.4	2.5
2002–03	2.3	2.3
2003–04	13.9	2.6

Building Regulations

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will amend the Approved Inspector Regulations 2000, to allow private practice building regulation control companies other than the National House Building Confederation to control the construction of dwellings for sale or rent. [163240]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to issue in the next few weeks a consultation document on designation of new home warranty schemes in the context of building control by approved inspectors. Subject to the outcome of that consultation process, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister hopes, later this year, to be able to take the necessary steps to allow approved inspectors to undertake building control on new homes for sale or private sector renting.

English Channel

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his policy is in respect of the removal of aggregates from the Median Deep section of the English Channel. [162900]

Keith Hill: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister is currently considering a proposal to dredge marine aggregates from an area known as Median Deep within the eastern English Channel. This proposal is one of a number of other similar ones within this part of the Channel that he has before him and which have been subjected to wide publicity and consultation.

My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister will determine each marine minerals dredging proposal in the light of all material environmental information, including the findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment, and his general approach to marine minerals dredging set out in 'Marine Minerals Guidance Note 1: Guidance on the Extraction by Dredging of Sand, Gravel and Other Minerals from the English Sea bed' (MMG1). This was published in July 2002 and copies were placed in the House of Commons Library. Copies may also be downloaded from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at www.odpm.gov.uk or obtained from Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Compulsory Purchase Orders

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the basis of valuations to be used for compulsory purchase orders when the land to be acquired is designated for road building. [162986]

Keith Hill: Irrespective of the purpose for which land is being acquired under compulsory purchase powers, its value has to be assessed in accordance with the compensation code set out in Part 2 of the Land Compensation Act 1961 and supplemented by case law. Where the acquiring authority and the vendor are unable to agree the amount payable on that basis, the matter falls to be settled by the Lands Tribunal in accordance with the provisions of Part 1 of the same Act.

Housing

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which local authorities in London have used the funding from the Homelessness Directorate in support of their local homelessness strategies to pay cash incentives to social rented sector tenants to relinquish their tenancy and buy a property on the open market; how much funding was used for this purpose, and how many homes were released for reletting, in each case. [162237]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1708W, which states that authorities have considerable discretion over how they use the grant, provided that they deliver the required outcomes. Details of all the individual services by each local authority are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he gives to local authorities on the approval of requests for extensions to domestic residences. [162803]

Keith Hill: Extensions to domestic residences within certain limits are permitted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. Outside those limits, it is for local authorities to assess applications in the light of their development plans, any design guidance they have issued, the comments of third parties (if relevant to planning) and any other relevant factors. The Government's planning policies make clear that applicants should be able to demonstrate how they have taken account of the need for good design. Good practice guidance on achieving high standards is set out in 'By Design', the companion guide to Planning Policy Guidance Note 1, which is on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at www.odpm.gov.uk.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* surveys he has commissioned and *(b)* research he has evaluated about the preferences of council tenants as to whether their housing should be managed by (i) the council, (ii) registered social landlords and (iii) arm's length management organisations. [162932]

Keith Hill: There has been no research conducted by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the preferences of council tenants for alternative options for housing management. Each stock owning Local Authority, through its Options Appraisal process, will consult the views of tenants on alternative arrangements for management of their housing stock.

Tom Brake: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what house building targets there have been for Sutton since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency; and if he will make a statement. [162833]

Keith Hill: House building targets are set for local authority areas. "Strategic Guidance for London Planning Authorities", Regional Planning Guidance 3, May 1996, proposed for Sutton a minimum 5,400 net additional dwellings over 15years, 1992 to 2006. This target was included in Sutton's replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in 2003. "The London Spatial Development Strategy (The London Plan)", published February 2004, set a minimum target for Sutton of 7,400 additional homes over 20 years, 1997 to 2016. This target derives from "London's Housing Capacity", Greater London Authority 2000, endorsed by boroughs through the London Planning Advisory Committee. As borough UDPs are reviewed or replaced, they will have to be in general conformity with "The London Plan".

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the turnout of tenants and leaseholders was in each of the arm's length management organisation votes in the last 12 months. [162475]

Keith Hill: The turnout and percentage vote in favour in all ballots held by local authorities on arm's length management organisation proposals to date are tabled as follows. All the ballots in Rounds 3 and 4, plus Colchester's in Round 2, were held in the last 12 months.

Percentage

Local authority	*Turnout*	*In favour*
ALMO Round 1		
Derby	48	88
Hounslow	35	83
Kirklees	47	81
Rochdale	46	90
Stockton-on-Tees	44	93
ALMO Round 2		
Barnsley	25	57
Carrick	61	96
Colchester	57	76
Leeds—East	35	83
Leeds—North East	41	88
Leeds—North West	42	89
Leeds—South	39	91
Leeds—South East	40	88
Leeds—West	38	90
Waltham Forest	49	85
ALMO Round 3		
Camden	30	23
High Peak	60	98
Islington	27	85
Sheffield: Brightside and Shiregreen	42	78
Sheffield: Central Area	47	87
South Lakeland	65	88
ALMO Round 4—bids		
Hammersmith and Fulham	40	81
Sheffield: Hillsborough, Nether Thorpe	45	87
Sheffield: Parson Cross, Foxhill, Longley	38	94
Sheffield: Westfield, Hackenthorpe	43	89

Local Authority Statistics

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list all local authorities, broken down by *(a)* type and *(b)* party political control. [156995]

Phil Hope: The information is as follows:

Local Authorities	
County Councils	[1]34
London Boroughs	[2]33
Metropolitan District	36
District Councils	238
Shire Unitary authorities	[3]46
Isles of Scilly	1
Total (England)	388
Wales[4]	22
Scotland[4]	29
Island councils	3
Northern Ireland	26

[1] Not including Isle of Wight unitary county
[2] Includes City of London
[3] Including Isle of Wight
[4] Unitary districts

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not systematically collect and maintain comprehensive and up-to-date information on changes in the party political control in individual local authorities.

New Deal for Communities

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library each New Deal for Communities delivery plan. [160343]

Yvette Cooper: All 39 New Deal for Communities Partnership's delivery plans have been made available in the Library of the House.

Ordnance Survey

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what factors underlay the decision to use uncompleted Ordnance Survey data in the Pan Government Agreement for Central Government. [148480]

Yvette Cooper: The Pan Government Agreement (PGA) is a non-binding internal arrangement between two Crown bodies, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Ordnance Survey (OS). Accordingly, the PGA is not a contract necessitating competition through prior advertisement in accordance with the European Commission public procurement Directives.

The PGA has been a tremendous success, increasing the number of central government organisations utilising geographic information from 40 to in excess of 120. Without this, it would be impossible to deliver on 2005 Modernising Government targets or to offer many citizen-based services. The success of the pilot of the PGA was noted by the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee's tenth report on the OS, which contained the following statement:

> "The Committee recommends that the Government provides funding for a long-term Pan Government Service Level Agreement to ensure widespread use of Ordnance Survey data across Government, so as to ensure the Government gets the best value for money. This should be done by the start of the 2003–04 financial year."

In comparison to the cost of previous agreements and the much more limited use of geographic information they provided, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister believes that the PGA offers very good value for money for government.

Public Toilets

Tom Levitt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidelines his Department issues to local authorities in respect of minimum standards for the *(a)* provision, *(b)* distribution and *(c)* maintenance of public toilets; and what guidelines are issued regarding public consultation on public toilets. [163427]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not provide any guidance to local authorities on the provision, distribution or maintenance of public toilets, or on the need to consult on this service. These functions are at the discretion of local authorities who have a power, but no duty, to provide public conveniences under section 87 of the Public Health Act 1936.

Recruitment Advertising

Pete Wishart: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155516]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Bromsgrove (Miss Kirkbride) on 17 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 23W.

Regeneration Partnerships

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many community and resident representatives have resigned from positions in regeneration partnerships over the past three years; and what assessment he has made of their reasons. [162573]

Yvette Cooper: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. There are a very large number of regeneration partnerships in existence across the country and there is no central record of how many there are, or of their membership. Many are locally established and have no central Government involvement.

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the adequacy of current arrangements for payments made to residents and community representatives involved in regeneration programmes. [162574]

Yvette Cooper: The Government welcomes and values the contributions that residents and community representatives make to regeneration partnerships. The arrangements for making any payments to those community representatives who are involved in regeneration programmes vary, depending on the programme and the nature of their involvement. If there are issues relating to the arrangements for a regeneration programme for which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible that my hon. Friend wishes to bring to my attention, then I would be happy to look into them.

Small Business Support

Brian Cotter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the support programmes for small businesses that *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies have financed in each of the last five years; how much money was allocated for each scheme in each year; how much money has gone unclaimed under each scheme; and how many small businesses have benefited from each scheme. [161253]

Yvette Cooper: The Cross-cutting review of government services for small business, published by the Small Business Service in December 2002 contained information on the services available to small businesses. This reported that the Government spends about £2.5 billion on a wide range of services for small firms. Further details can be found at the Small Business Service website at: http://www.sbs.gov.uk/crosscutting/default.php.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Annual Report 2003 published in May 2003 (Cm 5906) contains details of the Office's programmes, a number of which would be available to support the work of small businesses.

The specific information asked for on individual schemes is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Social Housing (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent on *(a)* maintenance and *(b)* repair of social rented housing in Greater London in each year since 1997. [162347]

Keith Hill: Local authorities provide data on council housing to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister but no consistent figures on expenditure on maintenance and repair are available. Local authorities can use both capital and revenue expenditure on maintenance and repair of their own stock but the returns from London boroughs on capital expenditure include work on improvements, renewal, conversions and adaptations.

The Housing Corporation keep records of maintenance and repair costs for social rented properties in the housing association sector, but on an individual Registered Social Landlord basis only. No figures are therefore available for individual boroughs or London as a whole and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Freight (Theft)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has held with the British International Freight Association regarding measures to reduce the incidence of theft of personal items during transit. [162591]

Ms Blears: I have not held any discussions with the British International Freight Association regarding measures to reduce the incidence of theft of personal items during transit.

Primates

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many licensed scientific experiments have been undertaken on primates in the United Kingdom in each of the last 10 years. [160270]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in table 20 of Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, Great Britain, 2002, and table 1 of Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, Northern Ireland, 1993–2002, copies of which are in the Library.

For ease of reference the numbers of procedures performed for the first time on primates each year are shown in the table.

Numbers of procedures

	Great Britain	*Northern Ireland*
1993	4,994	—
1994	5,163	—
1995	4,721	—
1996	4,374	—
1997	3,908	—
1998	3,655	—
1999	4,003	—
2000	3,690	—
2001	3,986	—
2002	3,977	—

"Reducing Crime—Changing Lives"

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultation took place with key stakeholders prior to the publication of the document Reducing Crime—Changing Lives; and whether trade unions were consulted. [160895]

Paul Goggins: Reducing Crime—Changing Lives sets out the Government's initial response to the Carter report.

The Home Secretary has sought and continues to seek views from all stakeholders on a number of issues relating to the effective management of offenders.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to publicise the role of the *(a)* voluntary and *(b)* private sector in the delivery of justice following the publication of the Carter Report; and if he will make a statement. [155617]

Paul Goggins: The Government's response to Patrick Carter's report "Managing Offenders—Reducing Crime" was outlined in the Government paper "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" both of which were published on 6 January 2004.

The "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" document sets out the Government's proposals for the reform of correctional services and seeks views from key stakeholders on a number of implementation issues including how best to ensure effective community involvement and improve contestability in the new National Offender Management Service.

The Government will analyse the responses to those questions and make them available, unless the respondent has requested confidentiality.

Anti-terrorism (Overseas Evidence)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on the admissibility of *(a)* hearsay evidence and *(b)* written evidence from abroad in relation to prosecutions under anti-terrorism legislation. [162610]

Mr. Blunkett *[holding answer 22 March 2004]*: Prosecutions under counter terrorist legislation are conducted in the same way as other prosecutions and the same rules on the admissibility of evidence apply, including the law on hearsay. At present, written statements from witnesses abroad who are unable to attend the trial, may be admitted as evidence if certain conditions are met. When implemented, the Criminal Justice Act 2003 provides that witness statements will generally be admissible in any criminal proceedings where a witness is abroad, subject to certain safeguards.

Cargo Theft

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidences of cargo theft were reported by contracted shipping delivery companies in each year between 1997 and 2003. [162419]

Ms Blears: The requested information is not collected centrally by the Home Office.

Child Abuse

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he gives to chief constables on the secondment of police officers who specialise in *(a)* internet and *(b)* non internet child abuse to other types of police activity. [158987]

Paul Goggins: There are no specific arrangements for seconding officers to this area of work. The deployment of police officers to specific posts is an operational matter for Chief Officers.

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with internet service providers who refuse to keep the internet addresses of customers after they change ISP and the effect of this on the tracking of online predators. [158988]

Paul Goggins: There has been considerable consultation with the Internet Industry over the last two years about retention of their business data. The Industry continues this dialogue. We are keeping Internet Service Providers data retention practices under review in consultation with the Industry.

Coroners

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he requires that bodies be released by hospitals immediately without precondition or delay once they are no longer required by a coroner for evidential purposes. [159971]

Paul Goggins: Once the coroner has released the body it is for the representatives of the deceased, working with the hospital, to arrange transfer of the body to its final resting place.

Corruption

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the actions the UK needs to take to ratify the UN Convention Against Corruption; and if he will place a copy in the Library. [158307]

Caroline Flint: Officials of the responsible Government Departments are considering what, if any, legislative or administrative amendments are required to enable the UK to meet its commitments under the Convention. Should any amendments be required, these will be enacted or put in place at the earliest opportunity. It is not possible to indicate when this process will be completed. The UK will be in a position to ratify the Convention once the Government are satisfied that the UK can fulfil the Convention's provisions.

Crime

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the percentage change in *(a)* overall recorded crime, *(b)* recorded violent crime, *(c)* burglaries and *(d)* vehicle thefts in Crosby has been since 1997. [160538]

Ms Blears: Recorded crime statistics below police force area level are collected on a Basic Command Unit (BCD) and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) basis. BCD areas equate to former police divisions/districts, with CDRPs equating to local authority areas.

The constituency of Crosby is not specified as being either a BCD or CDRP, however there is data available at these levels for the area of Sefton, which is located within the borough constituency of Crosby. Figures at these levels are available for 1999–2000, 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03. Data for six key offences only has been previously published at CDRP level for these years and are given in the table.

A greater breakdown of recorded crime figures for 2002–03 by CDRP, police force and region has recently been made available and is given in the Home Office website at www.crimestatistics.org.uk/output/page1.asp.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership data from April 1999 to March 2003

CDRP: Sefton Force: Merseyside	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*[1]
Violence against the person	2,034	2,307	2,225	3,016
Sexual offences	156	148	130	185
Robbery	288	224	346	334
Burglary dwelling	1,712	1,528	2,269	2,533
Theft of a motor vehicle	2,285	2,014	1.926	1,542
Theft from a vehicle	2,250	1,852	2,009	1,629

[1] Merseyside police implemented the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) on 1 April 2002. Broadly, the NCRS had the effect of increasing the number of crimes recorded by the police. Therefore, following the introduction of the Standard, numbers of recorded crimes are not directly.

Mr Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many violent crimes were committed in *(a)* the London Borough of Havering and *(b)* Romford in the last 12 months; [154851]

(2) what estimate he has made of the level of crime in *(a)* the London Borough of Havering and *(b)* Romford which is drug related. [154852]

Ms Blears: Recorded crime statistics below police force area level are collected on a basic command unit (BCD) basis. In London, BCD areas equate to London boroughs. The total number of violent crimes (violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery offence groups) recorded in Havering BCU in 2002–03 was 4,558. The Metropolitan police introduced the National Crime Recording Standard on 1 April 2002, and this may have increased the number of crimes recorded in the violence against the person offence group.

Recorded crime data is collected by offence type, rather than by particular circumstance. It is therefore not possible to distinguish drug related crime within recorded crime figures.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on the role of the Criminal Cases Review Commission in seeking views on *(a)* controversial expert evidence and *(b)* investigative methods; [159704]

(2) what procedure is used by the Criminal Cases Review Commission if it suspects that *(a)* a body of evidence and *(b)* an investigative method is flawed. [159705]

Paul Goggins: The commission treats every application received on its individual merits. Cases regularly raise issues involving expert evidence and

investigative methods. Where necessary the commission instructs a professionally qualified person to give a view on the expert evidence or the investigative method, and such further evidence is taken into account when a decision is made on the case. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the Commission to ask for further evidence on a particular issue which is common to several cases.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research has been conducted into the motives of solicitors who submit large numbers of applications to the Criminal Cases Review Commission. [159710]

Paul Goggins: No research has been conducted into the motives of solicitors who submit large number of applications to the Commission. Some firms of solicitors specialise in this area and so it is not unexpected that several applications every year will come from them. To date the Commission has not received a large number of applications at the same time from any individual solicitor or firm. It continues to receive applications unsupported by legal representation.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the findings of the Criminal Cases Review Commission's Working Group on Sexual Abuse were. [159711]

Paul Goggins: The "findings" of the Criminal Cases Review Commission's Working Group on Sexual Abuse enabled the Commission to analyse and refine it's approach to child sexual abuse cases generally, to help it establish best practice, to investigate developments that might discover new evidence in such cases and communicate any lessons obtained internally and to other stakeholders.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what process is used for recruiting members of the Criminal Cases Review Commission. [159713]

Paul Goggins: Members of the Criminal Cases Review Commission are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen on the recommendation of my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister. New members are recruited in accordance with the Code of Practice for Public Appointments issued by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointment. The process includes:

open advertising of the posts

an initial sift of applications by external recruitment consultants

short-listing and interview by a panel comprising of the Director of Criminal Law and Policy of the Home Office, the Chairman of the Commission and an Independent Assessor

consultation with interested Ministers (including the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland) and the Cabinet Office's Public Appointment Unit.

Criminal Justice Act

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will bring section 144 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 into force as a matter of urgency. [158562]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 4 March 2004]*: The Sentencing Advisory Panel has recently consulted on the reduction of sentence for a guilty plea with a view to proposing to the Sentencing Guidelines Council that it should make a guideline in this area. We consider that it would be sensible to await the outcome of this work before making a final decision on the commencement of section 144 of the 2003 Act.

Dogs Act

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were required to provide DNA samples as a result of *(a)* enquiries and *(b)* convictions in connection with section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871 in (i) Wales and (ii) England in (A) 2001, (B) 2002 and (C) 2003. [162181]

Ms Blears: Under section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871 a Magistrates' Court may make an order for a dog to be kept under proper control or for the destruction of the dog. The section does not create an offence.

The powers contained in Section 63 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (as amended) enable the police to take a non-intimate DNA sample without consent from a person held in police detention who has been charged with, informed they will be reported for or convicted of an offence and they apply only in respect of recordable offences. Since section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871 does not create an offence, there are no legal powers to take a DNA sample in these circumstances.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were required to attend a police station to provide fingerprints and photographs after being found guilty under section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871 in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* England in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002 and (iii) 2003. [162182]

Ms Blears: Under section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871 a Magistrates' Court may make an order for a dog to be kept under proper control or for the destruction of the dog. The section does not create an offence.

The powers under sections 27 and 61 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984, (as amended), to take fingerprints without consent from convicted persons are restricted to persons who have been convicted for a recordable offence.

Recordable offences are those which have to be recorded on the Police National Computer to form part of a person's criminal record. They are set out in the National Police records (Recordable Offences) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000 No 1139) (as amended). They include convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings given in respect of an offence punishable with imprisonment and any offence specified in the Schedule to the regulations.

Under section 64A(1) of PACE, a constable or designated person may photograph a person detained at a police station with or without that person's consent. Where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting the involvement of a person in a criminal offence, but that person is at a police station voluntarily and not detained, there are no powers to take fingerprints or photograph that person without consent.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were required to provide fingerprints and photographs when attending a police station in connection with a possible offence relating to section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871 in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* England in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002 and (iii) 2003. [162183]

Ms Blears: Under section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871 a Magistrates' Court may make an order for a dog to be kept under proper control or for the destruction of the dog. The section does not create an offence.

The powers under sections 27 and 61 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984, (as amended), to take fingerprints without consent from convicted persons are restricted to persons who have been convicted for a recordable offence.

Recordable offences are those which have to be recorded on the Police National Computer to form part of a person's criminal record. They are set out in the National Police records (Recordable Offences) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000 No 1139) (as amended). They include convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings given in respect of an offence punishable with imprisonment and any offence specified in the Schedule to the regulations.

Under section 64A(1) of PACE, a constable or designated person may photograph a person detained at a police station with or without that person's consent. Where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting the involvement of a person in a criminal offence, but that person is at a police station voluntarily and not detained, there are no powers to take fingerprints or photograph that person without consent.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many successful prosecutions were carried out under section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871 in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* England in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002 and (iii) 2003. [162184]

Ms Blears: Defendants proceeded against and those convicted of offences under Section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871 are grouped together with those dealt with for offences under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1989 in the information collected centrally and cannot be separately identified.

The number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts and found guilty at all courts for offences under these two statutes, for England and Wales separately for 2001 and 2002 is contained in the table.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts' and found guilty at all courts under section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871 and the Dangerous Dogs Act 1989, England and Wales 2001 and 2002 [1]

	Proceeded against	*Found guilty*
2001		
England	306	76
Wales	69	25
Total	375	101
2002		
England	279	84
Wales	57	21
Total	336	105

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the Autumn.

Domestic Violence

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much public funding has been provided to front-line domestic violence agencies in Crosby since 1997. [160385]

Mr. Blunkett: This information is not available. However, Crosby falls under the remit of Sefton's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Since April 2003 the Home Department has allocated £62,600 to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. In November 2003, £17,600 from this funding was provided to aid front-line domestic violence agencies in Sefton. The funding will run until March 2006.

Drug Abuse (Avon and Somerset)

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was spent in the Avon and Somerset police force area in 2003–04 to combat drug abuse. [161867]

Caroline Flint: Financial information is not maintained in a form that shows the proportion of mainstream funding allocated specifically to combating drug misuse in the Avon and Somerset police force area. However, information is available on the levels of funding allocated to Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), Drug Action Teams (DATs) and Basic Command Units (BCUs). The rounded figures are as follows:

CDRPs—£1.45 million (out of £2.09 million Building Safer Communities Funding)

DATs—£6.57 million

BCD funding:

£1.3 million to deliver the Criminal Justice Interventions Programme

£1.7 million to support delivery of locally determined action to combat drug misuse

Emergency Services (Attacks)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many attacks on *(a)* police officers and *(b)* fire officers there were in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough in each of the last 10 years; [159222]

(2) how many burglaries were committed in *(a)* the Metropolitan police area and *(b)* each London borough in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and in how many cases convictions were obtained for (i) custodial and (ii) non-custodial sentence, broken down by police force area; [159223]

(3) how many violent crimes against people were committed in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in each year since 1997. [159224]

Ms Blears: The offence of 'Assault on a constable' was added to the recorded crime series from April 1998. The available published figures at police force area level are given in the table. A greater breakdown of recorded crime figures for 2002–03 by local authority, police force and region is given on the Home Office website at www.crimestatistics.org.uk/output/Page1.asp.

The numbers of assaults on fire officers are not collected by the Home Office.

Number of assaults on a constable offences in Greater London (Metropolitan police and City of London)

	Offences recorded
1998–99	1,636
1999–2000	1,438
2000–01	1,397

Note:
Footnotes are in violent crime table.

The Metropolitan police recorded 72,237 offences of Burglary in a dwelling, and 41,190 offences of Burglary in a building other than a dwelling, in the period April 2002 to March 2003, amounting to a total recorded burglary offence figure of 113,427.

A related collection, of numbers of recorded burglaries in dwellings, has been collected and published by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) area for financial years since 1999–2000. In the Metropolitan police area, CDRP areas equate to boroughs. The requested figures are given in the table.

Table 1: Numbers of burglary dwelling offences recorded by the Metropolitan police at CDRP level

Borough/CDRP	*Burglary dwelling, offences recorded 2002–03*
Barking and Dagenham	1,262
Barnet	2,607
Bexley	1,241
Brent	2,804
Bromley	1,923
Camden	3,348
City of Westminster	2,110
Croydon	2,769
Baling	2,912
Enfield	2,864
Greenwich	1,875
Hackney	3,646
Hammersmith and Fulham	2,186
Haringey	3,403
Harrow	1,952
Havering	1,058
Heathrow Airport	1
Hillingdon	2,023
Hounslow	1,968
Islington	3,083
Kensington and Chelsea	1,652
Kingston upon Thames	606
Lambeth	4,410
Lewisham	2,743
Merton	1,048
Newham	2,012
Redbridge	1,757
Richmond upon Thames	1,295
Southwark	3,141
Sutton	778
Tower Hamlets	2,114
Waltham Forest	2,559
Wandsworth	3,087

The available convictions data is given in the table.

Table 2: Number of offenders[1] found guilty, sentenced and sentenced to a non-custodial or custodial sentence for burglary at magistrates' courts in Greater London[2]; including those found guilty and sentenced at the Crown court where these courts are the committing court, 2002

		Sentence breakdown		
	Found guilty	*Sentenced*	*Non-custodial*	*Custodial*
Inner London magistrates courts[2]				
Bow Street	136	118	50	68
Camberwell Green/ Tower Bridge	562	489	198	291
Greenwich/Woolwich	212	173	50	123
Guildhall Justice Rooms	45	49	24	25
Highbury Corner	358	276	97	179
Horseferry Road	217	192	61	131
Marylebone	3	4	3	1
South Western	333	310	149	161
Thames	432	392	190	202
West London	312	272	130	142
Outer London boroughs				
Barking and Dagenham	95	89	48	41
Barnet	90	72	42	30
Barnet	43	47	19	28
Bexley	71	62	34	28
Brent	159	132	45	87
Bromley	95	87	39	48
Croydon	171	150	66	84
Eating	178	155	67	88
Enfield	164	144	81	63
Haringey	154	139	64	75
Harrow	82	68	39	29
Havering	73	66	34	32
Hillingdon	84	78	51	27
Hounslow	127	109	54	55
Kingston-upon-Thames	69	64	33	31
Merlon	95	87	37	50
Newham	195	176	99	77
Redbridge	124	118	44	74
Richmond-upon-Thames	91	76	42	34
Sutton	77	73	43	30
Waltham Forest	155	137	58	79
Total	5,002	4,404	1,991	2,413

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis
[2] Information held centrally does not allow a breakdown of cases by borough in the Inner London area

The numbers of recorded violent crimes in the Greater London area in each year since 1997 are given in the table. Violent crime is composed of offences of violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery. It should be noted that both the change in counting rules for recorded on 1 April 1998, and the adoption of the National Crime Recording Standard on 1 April 2002, had the effect of inflating the number of crimes recorded, particularly for crimes of violence against the person.

Number of violent offences in Greater London (including City of London)

	Number of recorded violent crimes
1997	87,634
1998–99[1]	[1]166,551
1999–2000	202,981
2000–01	205,632
2001–02	225,522
2002–03[2]	232,732[2]

[1] There was a change of counting rules for recorded crime on 1 April 1998, which had the effect of increasing the number of crimes counted. Numbers of offences for years before and after this date are therefore not directly comparable.
[2] The Metropolitan police and City of London forces introduced the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002. Broadly, the NCRS had the effect of increasing the number of crimes recorded by the police. This has impacted particularly in violent crime. Therefore, following the introduction of the Standard, numbers of recorded crimes are directly comparable with previous years.

Numbers of violent crimes are also collected at CDRP level. The available information is given in the table.

Table 3: Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships from April 1999 to March 2003 London Region: Violent crime = Violence against the person, Sexual offences and Robbery

			Total violent crime: Total offences recorded			
CDRP Family	*CDRP*	*Force*	*1999–2000*[1]	*2000–01*[2]	*2001–02*[2]	*2002–03*[2,3]
1	City of London	London, City of	595	605	678	1,007
6	Barking and Dagenham	Metropolitan Police	3,910	4,545	5,013	5,329
3	Barnet	Metropolitan Police	5,364	5,835	6,422	6,597
8	Bexley	Metropolitan Police	3,595	3,815	4,062	4,098
2	Brent	Metropolitan Police	7,758	8,055	8,381	8,379
8	Bromley	Metropolitan Police	3,908	4,671	4,992	5,670
1	Camden	Metropolitan Police	7,282	7,551	8,328	7,935
1	City of Westminster	Metropolitan Police	12,200	11,397	12,269	12,352
3	Croydon	Metropolitan Police	7,276	8,287	8,685	9,957
2	Ealing	Metropolitan Police	8,715	8,284	9,448	9,325
3	Enfield	Metropolitan Police	5,274	6,217	6,665	6,964
2	Greenwich	Metropolitan Police	7,054	7,120	7,368	7,954
2	Hackney	Metropolitan Police	9,469	8,966	10,081	9,646
3	Hammersmith and Fulham	Metropolitan Police	5,780	5,498	5,845	5,856
2	Haringey	Metropolitan Police	7,313	7,973	8,206	8,123
3	Harrow	Metropolitan Police	3,102	3,147	3,668	3,573
8	Havering	Metropolitan Police	3,046	3,337	3,947	4,558
3	Hillingdon	Metropolitan Police	4,338	4,773	5,679	5,847
3	Hounslow	Metropolitan Police	6,060	6,398	7,119	8,372
2	Islington	Metropolitan Police	7,350	7,218	7,673	8,436
3	Kensington and Chelsea	Metropolitan Police	4,304	4,444	4,443	4,450
3	Kingston upon Thames	Metropolitan Police	2,713	2,860	3,138	3,312
2	Lambeth	Metropolitan Police	12,167	13,156	15,241	13,752
2	Lewisham	Metropolitan Police	6,722	7,250	7,856	7,795
3	Merton	Metropolitan Police	3,358	3,447	3,974	4,322
2	Newham	Metropolitan Police	9,344	9,784	10,383	10,679
3	Redbridge	Metropolitan Police	4,453	4,847	5,182	5,892
3	Richmond upon Thames	Metropolitan Police	2,375	2,321	2,580	2,942
2	Southwark	Metropolitan Police	9,943	10,048	11,284	10,898
8	Sutton	Metropolitan Police	2,469	2,393	2,905	3,476
2	Tower Hamlets	Metropolitan Police	7,292	8,105	8,854	9,777
3	Waltham Forest	Metropolitan Police	5,755	6,332	7,424	7,506
3	Wandsworth	Metropolitan Police	6,798	6,580	7,314	7,510
	Heathrow[4]	Metropolitan Police	n/a	n/a	393	403

[1] CDRP total may differ from police force area total due to the boundary change on 1 April 2000, whereby the Metropolitan police ceded parts of it area to three surrounding forces (Hertfordshire, Essex and Surrey).
[2] Total CDRP data may not tally exactly with published totals for police force areas. This is due to a variety of reasons, mainly related to the procedures used to calculate the CDRP figures.
[3] The Metropolitan police and City of London forces introduced the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002. Broadly the NCRS had the effect of increasing the number of crimes recorded by the police. This has impacted particularly in violent crime. Therefore, following the introduction of the standard, numbers of recorded crimes are not directly comparable with previous years.
[4] Heathrow was added to the CDRP series from April 2001, and is currently un-assigned to a family.

Forensic Science Service

Colin Burgon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions his Department has had with Serco regarding the future of the Forensic Science Service. [161230]

Ms Blears: None, but as part of the Outline Business Case Home Office advisers are conducting market soundings with a cross-section of commercial organisations and investors.

Greater London Crime Statistics

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* arrests were made, *(b)* people were charged, *(c)* cautions were issued and *(d)* convictions there were in Greater London, broken down by (i) police force, (ii) constituency and (iii) local authority area in each year since 1997. [162336]

Ms Blears: It is not possible, from the statistics collected centrally on arrests, court proceedings and

cautions, to identify constituencies in the Greater London Area, but the tables show the available information:

Table A relates to persons arrested in the Greater London Area, by police force area and is limited to arrests for notifiable offences and covers the financial years, 1999–2000 to 2002–03. Arrest figures are not collected centrally below police force area.

Table B relates to persons proceeded against for offences in the Greater London Area (statistics of people charged are not collected centrally) and those convicted in each borough in Outer London and each magistrates court in Inner London (it is not possible from the statistics collected centrally to identify boroughs in Inner London). The figures include persons convicted at the Crown court when committed for trial or sentence from the courts/boroughs shown.

Table C shows persons cautioned for all offences (excluding summary motoring offences for which cautions are not issued) by police force area. Caution figures are not collected centrally below police force area.

Table A: Persons arrested for notifiable offences recorded by the police, by police force area, Greater London, 1999–2000 to 2002–03

Police force area	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Metropolitan police	202,218	180,634	179,358	186,808
City of London	n/a	4,286	4,398	4,577
Greater London	[1]207,600	184,920	183,756	191,385

n/a = Not available.
[1] Estimated.
Note:
Information for earlier years is not available on a consistent basis.

Table B: Number[1] of persons proceeded against and found guilty of all offences in Greater London[2] by police force area and magistrates' court/London Borough—1997 to 2002[1]

	1997		*1998*		*1999*	
	Persons proceeded against	*Persons found guilty*	*Persons proceeded against*	*Persons found guilty*	*Persons proceeded against*	*Persons found guilty*
Inner London magistrates' courts[2]						
City of London Police						
Guildhall Justice Rooms	8,462	6,315	9,282	6,416	9,109	6,523
Metropolitan Police						
Bow Street[3]	12,671	10,122	9,514	7,665	7,345	5,796
Camberwell Green/Tower Bridge	24,196	18,273	25,690	19,521	23,353	17,555
Greenwich/Woolwich	12,903	10,352	15,289	12,519	14,264	11,481
Highbury Corner[4]	22,061	16,070	19,732	14,937	16,079	12,287
Horseferry Road	11,052	8,819	13,118	10,519	13,878	11,463
Marylebone	12,615	9,346	15,208	11,898	13,563	10,015
South Western	10,788	8,203	9,990	7,411	9,774	7,594
Thames	9,777	6,995	4,506	3,505	14,658	10,347
West London	11,009	7,960	12,735	9,320	10,940	7,736
Inner London Youth Courts[5]	767	704	9	229	n/a	191
Outer London Boroughs						
Metropolitan Police						
Barking and Dagenham	2,673	2,073	3,396	2,508	3,399	2,610
Barnet	7,625	6,210	8,440	7,085	7,365	6,020
Bexley	2,390	1,761	2,436	1,756	2,613	1,935
Brent	10,943	7,912	10,264	7,910	9,607	7,525
Bromley	5,890	4,497	6,145	4,868	5,189	4,171
Croydon	10,341	7,467	11,545	9,474	8,570	6,793
Ealing	7,313	5,217	6,176	4,502	5,626	4,137
Enfield	4,071	2,777	5,028	3,796	6,543	5,106
Haringey	6,768	5,000	7,462	5,575	8,141	5,898
Harrow	4,143	2,822	4,505	3,440	4,463	3,185
Havering	4,650	3,699	3,612	2,703	4,601	3,661
Hillingdon	7,597	5,817	7,901	6,142	7,220	5,538
Hounslow	8,327	6,013	9,129	6,815	8,570	6,138
Kingston-upon-Thames	4,171	3,109	4,189	3,103	3,692	2,789
Merton	5,206	4,128	4,657	3,833	4,311	3,487
Newham	7,901	5,892	9,200	7,144	8,873	6,837
Redbridge	5,533	4,256	5,648	4,484	5,134	4,099
Richmond-upon-Thames	3,912	3,086	3,292	2,616	3,506	2,767
Sutton	3,311	2,452	3,585	2,686	2,779	2,152
Waltham Forest	6,572	4,755	6,987	5,373	6,074	4,532
Total Metropolitan Police	247,176	185,787	249,388	193,337	240,130	183,845
Total Greater London	255,638	192,102	258,670	199,753	249,239	190,368

	2000		2001		2002	
	Persons proceeded against	*Persons found guilty*	*Persons proceeded against*	*Persons found guilty*	*Persons proceeded against*	*Persons found guilty*
Inner London magistrates' courts[2]						
City of London Police						
Guildhall Justice Rooms	10,815	8,719	11,262	9,552	10,338	8,078
Metropolitan Police						
Bow Street[3]	6,908	5,512	6,152	4,550	7,757	5,874
Camberwell Green/Tower Bridge	18,745	13,597	15,564	10,493	17,288	12,085
Greenwich/Woolwich	11,834	8,780	11,788	8,627	13,595	10,481
Highbury Corner[4]	13,696	10,141	10,857	7,287	12,174	8,761
Horseferry Road	14,950	12,247	18,483	14,912	15,460	12,487
Marylebone	14,728	11,782	14,405	11,835	21,268	18,038
South Western	14,106	11,915	13,053	10,711	15,047	12,485
Thames	11,510	7,641	10,554	6,968	11,638	7,657
West London	11,117	7,348	11,086	6,941	11,937	7,914
Inner London Youth Courts[5]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Outer London Boroughs						
Metropolitan Police						
Barking and Dagenham	3,800	3,100	3,652	2,905	4,207	3,240
Barnet	8,535	6,988	6,903	5,383	7,400	5,681
Bexley	2,685	1,891	2,676	1,862	2,955	2,159
Brent	9,516	7,366	9,222	7,086	9,412	7,530
Bromley	5,251	4,032	5,472	4,148	6,796	5,224
Croydon	8,066	6,503	8,071	6,333	6,528	4,206
Ealing	5,279	3,571	4,443	3,148	5,852	4,146
Enfield	7,134	5,509	6,149	4,427	8,148	6,213
Haringey	9,728	7,174	8,268	5,569	10,298	7,608
Harrow	4,600	3,379	4,104	2,825	5,404	3,978
Havering	4,542	3,685	4,114	3,086	6,205	4,927
Hillingdon	6,947	5,182	7,246	5,363	8,508	6,681
Hounslow	8,018	5,734	7,349	4,908	5,972	4,300
Kingston-upon-Thames	3,819	2,914	4,179	3,159	4,030	3,149
Merton	4,654	3,850	4,441	3,594	5,032	4,149
Newham	10,587	8,220	9,275	6,733	11,492	8,858
Redbridge	5,470	4,291	4,317	3,278	5,575	4,423
Richmond-upon-Thames	3,199	2,423	3,242	2,381	3,629	2,759
Sutton	2,878	2,251	2,915	2,200	3,233	2,506
Waltham Forest	6,085	4,682	5,770	4,225	6,548	5,234
Total Metropolitan Police	238,387	181,708	223,750	164,937	253,388	192,753
Total Greater London	249,202	190,427	235,012	174,489	263,726	200,831

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Information held centrally does not allow a breakdown of cases by borough in the Inner London area.
[3] Includes Marlborough Street, 1997–99.
[4] Includes Clerkenwell and Hampstead, 1997–98.
[5] Cases included with adults courts from 1998 (from 1999 for cases heard at the Crown court).

Table C: By police force

Year/Police	*Cautioned*[1]
1997	
City of London	1,146
Metropolitan	53,632
Total	54,778
1998	
City of London	751
Metropolitan	57,969
Total	58,720
1999	
City of London	709
Metropolitan	46,239
Total	46,948
2000	
City of London	559
Metropolitan	36,758
Total	37,317

Table C: By police force

Year/Police	*Cautioned*[1]
2001	
City of London	902
Metropolitan	31,337
Total	32,239
2002	
City of London	1,083
Metropolitan	32,088
Total	33,171

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Statistics on court proceedings and cautions for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

Homicide Law

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the research conducted by the Law Commission into the deficiencies in the English law of homicide. [159709]

Paul Goggins: There are two recent pieces of work which the Law Commission have undertaken on the law of homicide. The first, published in September 2003, was entitled "Children: Their non-accidental death or serious injury (criminal trials)" (no 282). The research the Law Commission drew on in undertaking this work is set out in their report. We have built on the Law Commission's proposals in formulating the offence of causing or allowing the death of a child in the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victim's Bill currently before Parliament, and the accompanying procedural measures.

The Commission have also begun work on the partial defences to murder, which reduce the charge of murder to that of manslaughter. They published a consultation document in October 2003 which sets out in more detail the research they have or will be undertaking on this. The consultation period closed at the end of January. We understand the Commission received a very large number of responses which they are considering and analysing. They are due to report in early summer and we await their conclusions with interest.

Huntingdon Life Sciences

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration was given, and by whom, to the ethical aspect of allowing dogs to be used for the testing of the effects of HCFCs at the Huntingdon Life Sciences Laboratory before a licence was granted for this procedure. [159795]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* Dogs are among the species specially protected by the Animals Scientific Procedures Act 1986, in that they can only be used in scientific studies when no other species are suitable or available. Their use in the study in question was to collect safety data about a chemical compound still in use.

Initial consideration of the choice of species for the study, taking account of ethical and scientific considerations, was undertaken by those concerned at the establishment when preparing their application for the necessary project licence authorities under the 1986 Act. The special case for using dogs had to be made out at that stage.

The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate provided a professional assessment of the application, and was satisfied that the use of dogs was justified and that there was no acceptable alternative. The Inspectorate was also satisfied that the other statutory criteria for granting the requested authorities had been met. In particular, the testing was for a permissible purpose, its likely benefit was deemed to outweigh the expected animal welfare costs, and the animal suffering was to be minimised consistent with achieving the scientific purpose.

Home Office officials acting on behalf of the Secretary of State considered and accepted the Inspectorate's recommendation that the licence authorities should be granted.

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* civil servants in his Department, *(b)* civil servants in other Departments and *(c)* external consultants are employed in taking forward his proposals for (i) identity cards, (ii) the National Identity Register and (iii) the draft identity cards legislation. [161786]

Beverley Hughes: The work on identity cards, the National Identity Register, and the draft identity cards legislation is carried out within the Identity Cards Programme. We currently have 23 civil servants and three full-time secondees, who are not established civil servants, working on the programme. Civil servants in other Departments contribute to the programme alongside their other duties but none are dedicated to this role.

We also have six external part-time consultants currently contracted to provide specialised advice on particular parts of the programme.

Internet Child Pornography

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of individuals suspected of *(a)* making and *(b)* possessing internet child pornography due to investigations carried out under Operation Ore have been (i) cautioned, (ii) prosecuted and (iii) convicted. [159485]

Paul Goggins: I understand that of approximately 6,000 suspects being investigated under Operation Ore, to date there have been 1,202 individuals charged and 655 convicted. There are no centrally aggregated figures available for the number of cautions.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action his Department is taking to tackle the pornographic exploitation of children on the internet. [161334]

Paul Goggins: The Government is determined to reduce availability of child pornography on the internet and to deal with those people who use such images. Within the Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet we work with partners in industry, the law enforcement agencies and children's charities in order to improve technical and legal methods of addressing this problem as well as promote public awareness. We are also working with our international partners in the G8 and [illegible]ED to the same end. Achievements so far include increased police resources, higher criminal penalties for use of and trading in indecent photographs of children, and new offences in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 dealing with people who act so as to involve children in pornography. Additionally, the National Crime Squad of England and Wales have embarked on a global initiative with partner countries currently comprising Canada, USA and Australia, as well as Interpol, to establish new ways of combating and reducing child abuse on line.

Legislation

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list by clause the provisions enacted in legislation sponsored by his Department since 1997 which have not been implemented. [158464]

Mr. Blunkett: The table, which has been placed in the Library, lists the bills introduced by the Home Office in the sessions 1997–98, 1998–99, 1999–2000, 2000–2001

and 2001–2002. The table indicates the extent to which provisions are not in force or only partially in force. Last session's bills are not included as the session only ended in November 2003.

We have now implemented over 94 per cent. of the legislation passed in these sessions.

In some cases provisions have been repealed and replaced by later legislation and improved measures such as those now in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act. In some cases legislation has been updated following representations from Parliament for example from the Home Affairs Select Committee and others.

Misuse of Computers Act

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what estimate he has made of the financial cost to *(a)* the UK and *(b)* the regions of the misuse of information technology systems in the last 12 months; [162416]

(2) what steps he is taking to reduce the incidence of misuse of information technology systems; and if he will make a statement. [162417]

Caroline Flint: There are no centrally aggregated figures of the financial cost to either the UK or the regions resulting from the misuse of information technology. There are a number of surveys and reports which seek to provide an estimate of the financial cost of such incidences, although these surveys are usually limited to a small sample of businesses and provide mainly subjective assumptions of financial loss. The government e-crime strategy will seek to bring together existing information in this area and consider the next steps to providing an accurate picture of the harm caused by computer related offences.

There are a variety of measures which the government is taking to reduce the criminal misuse of computer systems.

We have set up the National Hi Tech Crime Unit (NHTCU) as part of the National Crime Squad to combat national and transnational hi-tech crime within or which impacts upon the UK. The Unit, together with the specialist units within local forces which also deal with hi-tech crime investigations, have established good international links with overseas industry and law enforcement, necessary to follow the evidence trail to discover and prosecute the perpetrators of offences committed against computer systems or facilitated by the misuse of technology.

We continue to keep all legislation which pertains to offences which can be committed by utilising information technology under review to ensure that developments in technology do not prevent law enforcement from being able to use legislative provisions to effectively investigate and prosecute computer related offences.

The government e-crime strategy currently being developed will look to provide a framework for Government, law enforcement and industry action in response to all crimes which can be committed through the misuse of technology. It will outline current legislation, policy and practice, as well as advancing and informing the debate on longer-term issues.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. David: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the timescale is for the introduction of the new National Offender Management Service. [161641]

Paul Goggins: An implementation team has been established and is currently preparing a detailed programme of work.

The changes will take some time to work through. The National Offender Management Service will come into being from 1 June 2004 and it is anticipated that it will have become fully functional by 2008–09.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans there are for the management of the *(a)* juvenile and *(b)* high security prison estate under the new National Offender Management Service. [160859]

Paul Goggins: As the Government report "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" makes clear, the Youth Justice Board will remain as a Non-Departmental Public Body with responsibility to the Home Secretary.

The management of the high security prison estate is being considered by the National Offender Management Service, implementation team as part of the wider implementation strategy.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultation took place with relevent trade unions prior to the publication of the document Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime. [160896]

Paul Goggins: Patrick Carter's report Managing Offenders- Reducing Crime was an independent review of the Correctional Services. The Government's response 'Reducing Crime- Changing Lives' sought views from key stakeholders.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he will take in the light of the Bichard Inquiry to ensure that relevant information is *(a)* collected by the National Offender Management Service and *(b)* shared with appropriate agencies. [161164]

Paul Goggins: Arrangements for the collection of data within the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the sharing of data with other appropriate agencies is being considered by the NOMS implementation team.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to publicise the Business Case for the National Offender Management Service. [161172]

Paul Goggins: The case for the establishment of a National Offender Management Service is outlined in Patrick Carter's independent report "Managing Offenders—Reducing Crime" published along with the Government response "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" on 6 January 2004.

Neighbourhood Wardens

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which of London's boroughs run neighbourhood warden schemes; how many wardens were employed in each of these boroughs at the latest date for which figures are available; how many boroughs directly *(a)* fund and *(b)* employ police community support officers (PCSOs); how many PCSOs each of these boroughs (i) funded and (ii) employed at the latest date for which figures are available; how many run a community safety accreditation scheme; and if he will make a statement. [162358]

Ms Blears: The following table shows London boroughs which have warden schemes funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Neighbourhood Wardens Team and the number of wardens the council employs:

Borough	*No. of Wardens*
Barking and Dagenham	4
Barnet	12
Brent	9
Camden	15
City of Westminster	18
Croydon	12
Ealing	8
Greenwich	10
Hackney	25
Hammersmith and Fulham	6
Haringey	14
Harrow	6
Havering	8
Hounslow	7
Islington	28
Kingston upon Thames	3
Lambeth	12
Lewisham	27
Merton	8
Newham	12
Redbridge	5
Southwark	27
Sutton	4
Tower Hamlets	29
Waltham Forest	10
Wandsworth	23

We are unable to supply figures for other types of warden schemes or warden numbers in London as this data is not collected.

Community Support Officers (CSOs), as defined by the Police Reform Act 2002, are all employees of the local Police Authority. In London and elsewhere local authorities have contributed to the funding of CSOs but they cannot employ them.

The Commissioner for the Metropolis informs me that the following Boroughs operate additional CSOs funded through Special Services Agreements under section 25 of the Police Act 1996.

Borough	*No of CSOs*
Camden	2
Greenwich	5
Hammersmith and Fulham	2
Hillingdon	7
Islington	4
Kensington and Chelsea	12
Tower Hamlets	8

At present the Metropolitan Police Service has no agreement with any of the London boroughs to accredit their staff under a community safety accreditation scheme.

Parole

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what methods are used by the Parole Board to assess whether an offender held in custody presents a risk which is manageable in the community, as defined under the Criminal Justice Act 2003. [159665]

Paul Goggins: The Parole Board considers the early release of prisoners either by means of a paper review, or by convening an oral hearing. In every case, the Parole Board is provided with a dossier of papers on behalf of the Secretary of State, which may include information about the index offence, previous offending, behaviour whilst in custody and progress on offending behaviour programmes, as well as reports prepared by probation officers, prison service staff and, where appropriate, psychiatrists or psychologists. The prisoner also has an opportunity to submit representations and, at oral hearings, give oral evidence and call witnesses.

In all cases, the Board's primary consideration is public protection. The Parole Board therefore uses all the available information to form an assessment of risk. In forming that assessment, the Board is required to take into account factors set out in the Secretary of State's Directions on the release or recall of prisoners. Copies of these Directions are to be found in the House Library, in Prison Service Order 6000 and Prison Service Order 4700.

The provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 in respect of the release of determinate sentence prisoners and dangerous prisoners have not yet been implemented. The new release arrangements for mandatory life sentence prisoners, pursuant to section 275 of the 2003 Act were introduced on 18 December 2003. In light of these changes, we are currently reviewing the Secretary of State's Directions for the release of all life sentence prisoners and a statement will be made in due course.

Police

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department has taken to improve the efficiency of the police since 1997, with particular reference to information and communication technology; and if he will make a statement. [161790]

Ms Blears: The Government wants to ensure that police resources are used efficiently as well as effectively. A target for annual efficiency gains by the police service of 2 per cent. has been in place since 1999–2000 and has been achieved in each year up to 2002–03, the last year for which figures are available. The efficiency target will be examined during the Spending Review 2004.

Since 1999–2000 police authorities have been required to include efficiency plans in their annual policing plans. Her Majestys Inspectorate of Constabulary assesses performance in relation to the efficiency plans.

Help to improve efficiency has been provided through:

the work of Her Majestys Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Police Standards Unit;

the introduction of Community Support Officers and empowered police staff, to help police officers concentrate on the tasks they are best suited and trained to undertake;

measures to reduce bureaucracy identified by the taskforce led by Sir David O'Dowd;

and by the introduction of the Policing Performance Assessment Framework.

Technology can play a significant role in reducing the burden of bureaucracy and in increasing efficiency.

The Home Office Science and Technology Strategy links together all of the individual strategies underway or planned in the Home Office and which contain Science and Technology strands.

This includes the Criminal Justice System (CJS) Strategic Plan for joint planning across the whole of the CJS by the Home Office, the Lord Chancellor's Department and the Attorney General's Office. The Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) was established from 1 April 1998 as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) to provide a national capability for information technology and communications solutions to the police service.

There has been central investment through PITO in key national projects over the last six years including Airwave the new digital police radio system, the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS), applications Supporting the National Strategy for Police Information Systems (NSPIS) and the development of the police-public interface.

Forces are also able to use central funding provided through police and other grants to make local investments in IT and have direct access to funding streams such as the Invest to Save Budget.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on *(a)* the recruitment of police officers, *(b)* the recruitment of graduates to work as police officers and *(c)* the Accelerated Promotion scheme for graduate police officers in Greater London. [162335]

Ms Blears: Recruitment in England and Wales from 1 April 1997 to 31 March 2003 was as follows:

	Number
1997–98	6,543
1998–99	5,391
1999–2000	4,535
2000–01	7,415
2001–02	10,215
2002–03	13,126

We now have record police numbers of 138,155 as at 31 December 2003.

Over the same period the Metropolitan Police Service recruited:

	Number
1997–98	1,199
1998–99	1,633
1999–2000	994
2000–01	1,350
2001–02	2,748
2002–03	3,489

We do not collate the number of graduates recruited into the police service centrally and cannot say how many graduates have been recruited. We believe that the Police Service remains an attractive career for graduates. Of the 4,947 candidates that have gone through the national assessment centre procedure since April 2003, 25 per cent. have been graduates.

The Accelerated Promotion Scheme for Graduates was replaced in April 2002 by the High Potential Development (HPD) scheme which recruits both graduates and non graduates, externally and from within forces, with the potential to reach at least superintendent rank. It ensures that they are equipped with the necessary skills to become highly effective in middle management, command and leadership roles. The scheme is actively marketed to graduates.

Three intakes are run each year. Five intakes have been completed. 96 candidates have been selected from these five intakes. Statistics for intakes 1–4 show that 67 per cent. of those recruited onto the scheme were graduates on application. We do not have data for the Greater London area.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of police officers in Greater London, broken down by rank, are *(a)* female and *(b)* from an ethnic minority. [162337]

Ms Blears: The information is provided in the table and is the position as at 31 March 2003.

(full-time equivalents)

	MPS		*City of London*	
	Number	*Percentage of total*	*Number*	*Percentage of total*
Women Officers				
ACPO Rank	5	13.9	0	0
Chief Superintendent	4	4.3	0	0
Superintendent	9	6.8	0	0
Chief Inspector	29	6.6	2	12.5
Inspector	97	7.1	3	5.9
Sergeant	468	11.1	9	8.3
Constable	4210	19.2	121	19.5
Total female officers	4822	17.1	135	16.6
Total number of officers	28231		811	
Minority Ethnic Officers				
ACPO Rank	3	8.3	0	0
Chief Superintendent	2	2.2	0	0
Superintendent	4	3	0	0
Chief Inspector	8	1.8	1	6.3
Inspector	40	2.9	1	2
Sergeant	132	3.1	2	1.9
Constable	1385	6.3	24	3.9
Total minority ethnic officers	1574	5.6	28	3.5
Total number of officers	28231		811	

Prison Governors

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* governing governors and *(b)* governor grades of prison establishments in England and Wales are from a minority ethnic group. [161062]

Paul Goggins: There are currently 40 Senior Operational Managers (formerly Governor grades) working in public sector prisons who are recorded as coming from a minority ethnic group (based on voluntary declarations). There are currently no Senior Operational Managers in charge of establishments (Governing Governor) recorded as from a minority ethnic group.

Prison Officers

Mrs. Ann Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison officer entry level training courses have been run over the past 12 months; what the start date of each course was; where each course was held; what the capacity of each course was; how many new recruits or converting staff started each course; how many completed each course; and if he will make a statement. [160745]

Paul Goggins: Between 1 March 2003 and 29 February 2004, 89 Prison Officer Entry Level Training courses started.

Details of those courses are set out in the tables.

(i) 1 March 2003—30 September 2003

Date	*Venue*	*Normal capacity*	*Number of completions*
3 March 2003	Local—HMP Kingston	12	12
10 March 2003	Local—HMP Whitemoor	20	18
17 March 2003	Local—HMP Albany	16	16
24 March 2003	Local—HMP Belmarsh	18	18
7 April 2003	Central—Prison Service College Aberford Road, Wakefield	100	104
7 April 2004	Local—HMP Standford Hill	14	14
14 April 2003	HMP Deerbolt	12	12
21 April 2003	Central—PSC Aberford Road	40	42
28 April 2003	Central—PSC Aberford Road	40	39
28 April 2003	Local—HMP Deerbolt	20	20
5 May 2003	Central—Prison Service College Newbold Revel, Rugby, Warwickshire	40	39
5 May 2003	Central—PSC Aberford Road	20	19
5 May 2003	Local—HMP Whitemoor	19	19
5 May 2003	Local—HMP Feltham	37	37
12 May 2003	Central—PSC Aberford Road	20	19
19 May 2003	Central—PSC Aberford Road	40	40
19 May 2003	Local—HMP Albany	22	22
19 May 2003	Local—HMP Nottingham	20	20
26 May 2003	Local—HMP Highpoint	19	19
2 June 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	20	23
2 June 2003	Local—HMP Kingston	16	16
2 June 2003	Local—HMP Nottingham	20	20
9 June 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	20	19
9 June 2003	Local—HMP Belmarsh	15	15
9 June 2003	Local—HMP Full Sutton	15	15
16 June 2003	Local—HMP Bullingdon	11	11
23 June 2003	Central—PSC Aberford Road	40	39
23 June 2003	Local—HMP Standford Hill	12	12
30 June 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	34
7 July 2003	Central—PSC Aberford Road	20	17
7 July 2003	Local—Bullingdon	14	14
14 July 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	20	18
14 July 2003	Local—HMP Whitemoor	12	12
21 July 2003	Local—HMP Highpoint	20	20
28 July 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	36
28 July 2003	Local—HMP Whitemoor	16	16
4 August 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	20	13
4 August 2003	Local—HMP Feltham	42	42
4 August 2003	Local—HMP Highpoint	20	20
11 August 2003	Central—PSC Aberford Road	40	38
11 August 2003	Central—PSC Aberford Road	20	20
18 August 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	30
18 August 2003	Central—PSC Aberford Road	20	22
25 August 2003	Central—PSC Aberford Road	40	39
1 September 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	20	14
8 September 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	20	14
8 September 2003	Local—HMP Full Sutton	13	13
8 September 2003	Local—HMP Belmarsh	15	15
15 September 2003	Local—HMP Bullingdon	13	13
15 September 2003	Local—HMP Frankland	20	20
15 September 2003	Local—HMP Nottingham	19	19
22 September 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	38
22 September 2003	Local—HMP Highpoint	20	20

(i) 1 March 2003—30 September 2003

Date	Venue	Normal capacity	Number of completions
29 September 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	37
29 September 2003	Local—HMP Stoke Heath	18	18
29 September 2003	Local—HMP Nottingham	19	19
Total		1,379	1,330

(ii) 1 October 2003–29 February 2004

Date	Venue	Normal capacity	Number of delegates	Number of completions
6 October 2003	Local—HMP Belmarsh	14	14	14
13 October 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	39	39
13 October 2003	Local—HMP Woodhill	17	17	17
20 October 2003	Local—HMP Wymott	14	14	14
27 October 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	35	35
27 October 2003	Local—HMP Feltham	33	33	33
3 November 2003	Local—HMP Wymott	18	18	18
3 November 2003	Local—HMP Highpoint	18	16	16
3 November 2003	Local—HMP Full Sutton	14	14	14
10 November 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	42	42
17 November 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	41	41
17 November 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	38	38
17 November 2003	Local—HMP Manchester	17	12	12
1 December 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	44	44
1 December 2003	Local—HMP Whitemoor	20	20	20
8 December 2003	Local—HMP Bullingdon	16	16	16
8 December 2003	Local—HMP Belmarsh	15	13	13
15 December 2003	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	39	39
12 January 2004	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	38	38
12 January 2004	Local—HMP Wymott	13	13	13
12 January 2004	Local—HMP Bullingdon	16	16	16
12 January 2004	Local HMP Woodhill	15	14	14
12 January 2004	Local—HMP Highpoint	20	20	19
12 January 2004	Local—HMP Full Sutton	18	18	18
19 January 2004	Local—HMP Highdown	19	19	19
19 January 2004	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	38	38
19 January 2004	Local—HMP Feltham	37	37	37
26 January 2004	Local—HMP Stoke Heath	10	10	10
2 February 2004	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	32	32
2 February 2004	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	20	17	17
9 February 2004	Local—HMP Frankland	15	15	15
16 February 2004	Central—PSC Newbold Revel	40	33	33
23 February 2004	Local—HMP Belmarsh	15	15	15
Total		834	800	799
Grand total		2,213	(800)	2,129

Records of number of delegates starting the course are available only for courses beginning from 1 October 2003.

It is not possible to provide information on the number of new recruits and the number of converting staff on each course. All existing staff apply to officer positions as external recruits, and not as transfers or promotions. As no distinction is made at the point of recruitment, no distinction is made in the data recorded.

Some central courses have operated at slightly above their normal capacity, to accommodate particular recruitment pressures at the time. Hence, in some cases, the numbers of completions exceeds the normal capacity.

Locally delivered courses generally do not have a pre-determined maximum capacity, but are planned to accommodate the number of officers who have been recruited. Hence, the capacity of locally delivered courses varies over time.

Mrs. Ann Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate the Prison Service has made of the number of new prison officers it will need to recruit to provide a full staff complement by April 2005. [160747]

Paul Goggins: On 29 February 2004 23,772 prison officer grades (Prison Officers, Senior Officers and Principal Officers) were employed by the Prison Service. In addition, prison officers contracted to work additional hours equivalent to in excess of 400 full-time officers through the contract supplementary hours scheme, giving a total staffing availability equivalent to 24,172 prison officer grades. This compared to an operational staffing requirement for prison officer grades of 24,627. These figures do not take account of new staff still in the recruitment process on 29 February 2004.

The Prison Service operational staffing requirement will change as new accommodation is brought into operation and as accommodation is temporarily taken

out of operational use for refurbishment. However, the current shortfall in overall staffing availability for prison officer grades against the current operational staffing requirement is equivalent to just 448 officers, or 1.82 per cent., which is an acceptable operating margin.

The Prison Service estimates that it will need to recruit 2,600 new prison officers between 1 February 2004 and 1 April 2005 to meet planned increased capacity and replace officers forecast to leave the service through retirement and for other reasons. This is in line with current levels of recruitment activity. However, actual recruitment over this period will depend on a variety of factors including the overall availability and use of resources.

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison officers in England and Wales are from a minority ethnic group. [161063]

Paul Goggins: 978 prison officer grade staff (prison officers, senior officers and principal officers) in public sector prisons are currently recorded as from a minority ethnic group, based on voluntary declarations. This represents 4.1 per cent. of staff currently employed in prison officer grades.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average leave entitlement is for staff at *(a)* state and *(b)* private jails in England and Wales. [160804]

Paul Goggins: A report commissioned in 2003 by the Prison Service Pay Review Body contained a comparison of annual holiday entitlements between private sector and state run prisons. An extract of the relevant table in this report follows.

Senior officer, prison officer and OSG and equivalent

	Days per year
Initial	
Prison service	25
Private sector	20
Maximum	
Prison service	33
Private sector	23

Note:
Prison service figures include three days privilege holiday taken on defined days during the year.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the differences are between pension levels at private and state run jails in England and Wales. [160805]

Paul Goggins: A report commissioned in 2003 by the Prison Service Pay Review Body contained a comparison of pension provision between private sector and state run prisons. Using a method of comparison to employer contribution rates, the difference between pension levels for prison officers at private and state run prisons in England and Wales has been calculated at an average salary benefit value of +9.5 per cent. to staff in state-run prisons. This figure reduces to +2 per cent. at the in-charge governor level.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average annual salary for prison officers is at *(a)* privately-run and *(b)* state-run prisons in England and Wales. [160801]

Paul Goggins: A report commissioned in 2003 by the Prison Service Pay Review Body contained an average salary comparison between private sector and state-run prisons. The study found the average basic salary for prison officers in state-run prisons in England and Wales to be £23,017 (at 1 April 2003 rates). The corresponding figure for private sector prisons was £16,077.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average salary is for prison officers at state-run prisons in England and Wales. [160806]

Paul Goggins: A report commissioned in 2003 by the Prison Service Pay Review Body contained average salary figures for state run prisons in England and Wales. This showed the average basic salary for prison officers in state-run prisons to be £23,017 (at 1 April 2003 rates).

Prison Staff

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of staff in each prison in England and Wales are from a minority ethnic group. [161064]

Paul Goggins: The information is contained in the table. The data reflects the proportion of all staff working at each public sector prison who have voluntarily declared themselves to be from a minority ethnic group, compared to the total staff in post.

Establishment	*Proportion of minority ethnic staff (based on voluntary declarations)*
Acklington	2.1
Albany	1.5
Ashwell	0.7
Askham Grange	4.8
Aylesbury	8.3
Bedford	5.9
Belmarsh	7.9
Birmingham	11.9
Blakenhurst	4.7
Blantyre House	2.6
Blundeston	2.0
Brinsford	8.8
Bristol	4.7
Brixton	24.6
Brockhill	7.4
Buckley Hall	3.3
Bullingdon	4.4
Bullwood Hall	6.1
Camp Hill	1.1
Canterbury	1.0
Cardiff	2.0
Castington	0.8
Channings Wood	1.1
Chelmsford	4.2
Coldingley	3.3
Cookham Wood	2.6
Dartmoor	3.1
Deerbolt	0.9
Dorchester	1.1
Dover	4.5

Establishment	Proportion of minority ethnic staff (based on voluntary declarations)
Downview	8.0
Drake Hall	2.0
Durham	0.9
East Sutton Park	1.4
Eastwood Park	3.3
Edmunds Hill	3.9
Elmley	3.8
Erlestoke	1.7
Everthorpe	0.8
Exeter	0.6
Featherstone	2.7
Feltham	16.9
Ford	1.1
Foston Hall	3.2
Frankland	1.6
Full Sutton	0.6
Garth	1.9
Gartree	4.2
Glen Parva	5.1
Gloucester	1.7
Grendon	4.6
Guys Marsh	2.4
Haslar	2.7
Haverigg	1.3
Hewell Grange	2.0
High Down	10.2
Highpoint	2.1
Hindley	1.5
Hollesley Bay	2.0
Holloway	34.9
Holme House	0.6
HQ	12.4
Hull	2.9
Huntercombe	7.0
Kingston	2.7
Kirkham	0.7
Kirklevington Grange	0.9
Lancaster	1.6
Lancaster Farms	0.9
Latchmere House	14.1
Leeds	4.4
Leicester	6.8
Lewes	4.4
Leyhill	1.8
Lincoln	1.0
Lindholme	0.7
Littlehey	4.1
Liverpool	0.6
Long Lartin	2.6
Low Newton	0.7
Maidstone	3.2
Manchester	2.9
Moorland	3.0
Morton Hall	3.5
New Hall	1.4
North Sea Camp	0.7
Northallerton	0.0
Norwich	2.7
Nottingham	4.1
Onley	4.2
Parkhurst	1.4
Pentonville	29.6
Portland	2.0
Preston	1.9
Ranby	2.0
Reading	5.4
Risley	1.3
Rochester	4.4
Send	2.9
Shepton Mallet	1.4
Shrewsbury	1.4
Stafford	4.0
Standford Hill	2.0
Stocken	2.6
Stoke Heath	2.7
Styal	6.1
Sudbury	3.4
Swaleside	5.9
Swansea	1.6
Swinfen Hall	3.0
The Mount	7.7
The Verne	1.4
Thorn Cross	0.5
Usk/Prescoed	3.2
Wakefield	3.1
Wandsworth	23.8
Warren Hill	2.9
Wayland	1.3
Wealstun	2.5
Weare	1.8
Wellingborough	5.4
Werrington	1.1
Wetherby	3.0
Whatton	2.1
Whitemoor	2.6
Winchester	1.3
Woodhill	4.2
Wormwood Scrubs	28.3
Wymott	2.5
Prison Service Total	5.4

Prison/Probation Services

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the Director General of the National Offender Management Service will ensure that the *(a)* Prison and *(b)* Probation Services are adequately funded to ensure that all their statutory duties are complied with. [160469]

Paul Goggins: The overall funding settlement for the National Offender Management Service will be secured as part of the usual Spending Review process. Funding for individual elements of the National Offender Management Service, including prison and probation services, will be determined by the Chief Executive who will take account of funding requirements necessary to discharge statutory duties.

Prisoner Categories

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are held in Category C prisons who have been designated as Category B prisoners. [159310]

Paul Goggins: I will write to the hon. Member.

Prisoner Statistics

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are being held in prisons in England and Wales, broken down by *(a)* ethnic and *(b)* religious group; and if he will provide the equivalent figures for each of the last five years. [160554]

Paul Goggins: A breakdown of the prison population in England and Wales by ethnic group on 28 February 2003 and by religion on 30 November 2003 is given in

the tables. Equivalent figures for each of the last five years can be found in the publication "Prison Statistics England and Wales 2002", a copy of which is available in the Library.

Prison population by religion 30 November 2003	
All Christian	42,087
Anglican	25,608
Free Church	1,389
Roman Catholic	12,858
Other Christian	2,232
Buddhist	1,062
Hindu	338
Jewish	178
Muslim	6,277
Sikh	522
Other non-Christian	243
Non-recognised	291
No religion	23,005
Not recorded	52
Total	74,055

Prison population by ethnic group 28 February 2003	
White	54,445
Black	11,942
South Asian	2,352
Chinese and other	3,468
Unrecorded	79
Total	72,286

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will break down by ethnic origin *(a)* prisoners in each prison in England and Wales and *(b)* the proportion of prisoners in each prison in England and Wales on the latest date for which figures are available. [161061]

Paul Goggins: A table showing the breakdown by ethnic origin of *(a)* prisoners in each prison in England and Wales and *(b)* the proportion of prisoners in each prison in England and Wales on 28 February 2003 has been placed in the Library.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men were being held in prison on 10 March 2004. [161626]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 15 March 2004]*: On 10 March 2004 there were 4,554 females and 70,409 males held in prison service establishments in England and Wales.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were released on early release on 10 March. [161627]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 15 March 2004]*: Information on the number of prisoners who were released on early release on 10 March 2004 is not yet available.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were eligible for early release on 10th March. [161628]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 15 March 2004]*: Information on the number of prisoners who were eligible for early release on 10 March 2004 is not yet available.

Prisons

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of whether the intended expansion in the use of contestability will require future private operators to run prisons at a lower cost, with the same targets for service delivery. [160858]

Paul Goggins: When evaluating bids following any competition, the Home Office uses best procurement practice in awarding the contract to the provider who offers best value for money, which may or may not be the lowest cost.

The introduction of greater contestability for offender services, including running prisons, will not lead to a change in this policy.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions have taken place with trade unions regarding future privately built but publicly run prisons. [160860]

Paul Goggins: Although future privately built but publicly run prisons are one of the options currently under consideration for the provision of additional offender accommodation, no decision has yet been taken on what form of procurement would be used. The trade unions will be consulted on the issue once firm proposals have been developed.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who will be responsible for the monitoring of the performance of privately run prisons under the National Offender Management Service. [160861]

Paul Goggins: The Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service will be responsible for monitoring the performance of privately run prisons.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there will be a requirement under the National Offender Management Service to renegotiate existing contracts for privately run prisons. [160862]

Paul Goggins: The existing contracts for privately run prisons are with the Secretary of State and will not change under the National Offender Management Service reforms.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* new prisons and *(b)* extensions are planned to be built; how many will be (i) publicly and (ii) privately run; how many new prison officers will be needed; and what category each new prison will be. [161607]

Paul Goggins: The information is as follows:

(a) 1,290 places will be provided at two new private sector prisons. Bronzefield, in Middlesex, will provide closed conditions for women and is due to open in June 2004. Peterborough will be a local prison and will hold both male and female prisoners. All new prisons are built to Category B standards but are categorised to reflect the need of the prevailing population profile.

The contracts for these new prisons contain the minimum staffing cover for different times of day and different areas of the prison. It will be for the contractor to decide how many prison custody officers will be needed to sustain the required staffing cover.

(b) Funding has been provided for additional places to be built at existing prisons by 2006. 1,400 places will be built in 2004 and 1,300 places will be built in 2005 in new houseblocks and ready-to-use units. The places will take the security category of the establishment in which they are built. A breakdown of accommodation for which the security categorisation has already been determined as follows:

Expected	*Establishment*	*Category*	*Places*
2004	Winchester-West Hill	Local	40
2004	Wymott	C	180
2004	Wealstun	C	180
2004	Swinfen Hall[1]	C	120
2004	Foston Hall	Female closed	40
2004	Ranby	C	180
2004	Blakenhurst	Local	180
2004	Wellingborough	C	120
2004	Swinfen Hall[1]	C	180
2005	Gartree	B	240
2005	Whatton	C	400

[1] HMP Swinfen Hall has two new houseblocks due in 2004.

It will be for local managers to decide the appropriate levels of staffing to deliver the appropriate regime and security cover.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisons with foreign nationals have specific work *(a)* led by a foreign nationals co-ordinator and *(b)* guided by relevant policies. [159287]

Paul Goggins: Some prisons with large numbers of foreign national prisoners have appointed a member of staff to act as a foreign nationals coordinator to work specifically to address their needs. Information on such prisons is not kept centrally but it tends to be in those prisons which have had a high number of foreign national prisoners for some time.

All prisons have a race relations liaison officer and a race relations management team that are responsible for the promotion of good race relations and the fair treatment of ethnic minority prisoners, who may include many foreign nationals.

Prison service policies aim to ensure that all prisoners, including foreign nationals, are treated fairly and that their needs are met. This includes maintenance of their ties with family members and their own community, diet, religion, and access to welfare, legal and interpreting services. Some prisons have produced a local policy document with specific guidance on how foreign national prisoners' needs should be met. However, detailed information about these policies is not monitored centrally and can be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Ann Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost has been of the maintenance and refurbishment of each prison for each of the last five years. [160749]

Paul Goggins: The information is set out in the following table.

Establishments	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*Total (£000)*
Acklington	227		642	3,653	715	5,237
Albany	271	130	12	418	2,014	2,845
Ashwell	1,277	2,991	2,269	1,176	2,559	10,272
Askham Grange				893	1,793	2,686
Aylesbury	418	876	1,688	2,975		5,957
Bedford	12		704	1,727	679	3,122
Belmarsh	90		495	990	808	2,383
Birmingham	259	1,025	1,855	7,422	7,017	17,578
Blakenhurst					88	88
Blantyre House	372	67		252	488	1,179
Blundeston			284			284
Brinsford	668	32	846	583	1,170	3,299
Bristol	1,626	4,705	3,148	339	1,737	11,555
Brixton	560	494	1,404	2,068	1,234	5,760
Brockhill	51	57		222	3,946	4,276
Buckley Hall					2,399	2,399
Bullingdon	101	37		213	107	458
Bullwood Hall			50	30	275	355
Camp Hill	2,135	92	3,173	2,934	3,700	12,034
Canterbury	986	1,166	301	512	636	3,601
Cardiff	299	1,097	1,929	2,584	4,274	10,183
Castington	3,920	4,838	4,620	1,164	1,699	16,241
Channings Wood	1,782	362	47	411	1,727	4,329
Chelmsford		151	897	1,889	4,531	7,468
Coldingley	1,352	102	198	383	598	2,633
Cookham Wood	22			217	590	829
Dartmoor	15	341	30		173	559
Deerbolt	2,539	882	90	2,424	1,529	7,464
Doncaster	311					311
Dorchester	106		734	2,232	842	3,914
Dover	821	35	1,262	1,689	585	4,392

Establishments	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	Total (£000)
Downview		512	289	303	708	1,812
Drake Hall	729	84	3,471	2,497	4,194	10,975
Durham	1,464	474	3,297	4,532	4,937	14,704
East Sutton Park	200	28			607	835
Eastwood Park	141		55	2,728	2,024	4,948
Edmunds Hill				11	1,323	1,334
Elmley					328	328
Erlestoke				476	3,492	3,968
Everthorpe			116	1,741	1,365	3,222
Exeter	156	229	794	13	441	1,633
Featherstone	104	82	84	1,186	259	1,715
Feltham	3,911	4,961	1,949	4,082	790	15,693
Ford	24		301			325
Foston Hall	50		701	43	82	876
Frankland	2,329	590	2,215	232	153	5,519
Full Sutton	132	1,358	112	812	539	2,953
Garth		453	1,003	506	217	2,179
Gartree		79	2,816	2,192	5,345	10,432
Glen Parva	363	47	746	338	987	2,481
Gloucester	139	468	2,980	1,015	184	4,786
Grendon	233	2,353	734	188		3,508
Guys Marsh				853	847	1,700
Haslar	18				658	676
Haverigg	3,589	3,692	332	212	1,724	9,549
Hewell Grange	1,387	207	455	121		2,170
Highdown	283	232	449	277	344	1,585
Highpoint	622	1,588	1,861	973	356	5,400
Hindley	535	21	190	2,282	689	3,717
Hollesley Bay	2,143	673	275	654	1,073	4,818
Holloway	289	1,305	666	1,096	1,746	5,102
Huntercombe			98	1,163	28	1,289
Holme House			199	865	1,897	2,961
Hull	474	58	412			944
Kingston	35	68	972	185	408	1,668
Kirkham	1,231	133	200	5,591	976	8,131
Kirklevington				213	3,026	3,239
Lancaster Castle		2,007	99	17	896	3,019
Lancaster Farms	855	422	71	1,336	1,531	4,215
Latchmere House	762	128			133	1,023
Leeds	424	263	3,094	2,306	1,782	7,869
Leicester	134		99		462	695
Lewes	152	42	61	937	1,928	3,120
Leyhill	74	148		99		321
Lincoln	2,219	2,484	2,800	4,403	931	12,837
Lindholme	924	5,611	1,311	789	2,769	11,404
Littlehey	562	12	448			1,022
Liverpool	1,136	3,296	2,519	834	95	7,880
Long Lartin	520	555	1,514	3,568	2,719	8,876
Low Newton	1,345	272	49	358		2,024
Maidstone	1,563	1,396	2,896	1,690	2,516	10,061
Manchester	56				256	312
Moorland					363	363
Moorland (Open)						0
Morton Hall			2,538	824	248	3,610
Mount	302	202	120	209	641	1,474
New Hall	431	96	1,128	234	239	2,128
North Sea Camp	33		80	191	27	331
Northallerton		1,741	627		925	3,293
Norwich		138	159	856	636	1,789
Nottingham		136		893	584	1,613
Onley	2,831	991	282	1,229	2,183	7,516
Parkhurst	691	290	497	27	237	1,742
Pentonville	868	1,044	1,528	2,867	5,763	12,070
Portland	1,311	306	1,479	4,100	5,559	12,755
Prescoed				176	198	374
Preston	481	2,970	1,712	1,428	4,919	11,510
Ranby	11	160	21	1,198	2,835	4,225
Reading	408	26		368	383	1,185
Risley	3,228	1,691	1,850	8,220	2,481	17,470
Rochester	1,338	3,043	2,333	6,310	2,732	15,756
Send	3,100	134	28			3,262
Shepton Mallet	11	889	635	428		1,963
Shrewsbury	558	60	12		1,182	1,812
Spring Hill				120	1,302	1,422

Establishments	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	Total (£000)
Stafford	113	125	247	785	1,281	2,551
Standford Hill			40	840	1,297	2,177
Stocken	88	17	359			464
Stoke Heath	553	553	675	384	2,388	4,553
Styal	52	469	39	11	194	765
Sudbury	260	182		13		455
Swaleside	35	872	1,880	757	947	4,491
Swansea		398	1,275	225	2,180	4,078
Swinfen Hall	982	153	50		642	1,827
The Verne	188	380	524	781	594	2,467
Thorn Cross			616	1,444	845	2,905
Usk	85		63		1,008	1,156
Wakefield	2,745	6,698	3,294	5,420	4,504	22,661
Wandsworth	2,085	2,164	3,782	5,123	2,196	15,350
Wayland		63	184	1,814	149	2,210
Wealstun	1,969	79		248	5,535	7,831
Weare	788	106	570	360	68	1,892
Wellingborough	196	76	49	240	253	814
Werrington	1,381		115	110		1,606
Wetherby	1,024	1,224	69	125	1,027	3,469
Whatton		504	1,639	27	659	2,829
Whitemoor	1,331	705	737	617	365	3,755
Winchester			185	1,616	4,032	5,833
Woodhill	27					27
Wormwood Scrubs	9,376	8,314	493	321		18,504
Wymott	265	35		253	1,327	1,880
Totals	90,672	92,845	101,325	144,309	170,606	599,757

Note:
Figures are construction costs, excluding professional fees. The additional accommodation programme and associated ancillaries are not included. Minor maintenance works undertaken locally are also excluded.

Mrs. Ann Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the latest estimates are for the maintenance and refurbishment of each prison for the next five years. [160750]

Paul Goggins: The latest estimates for maintenance and refurbishment set out in the following table are for the financial years 2004–05 and 2005–06. Funding allocations for the years 2006–07 to 2008–09 will be determined in the Spending Review 2004.

Prison Service maintenance/refurbishment—Future years

Establishments	2004–05	2005–06	2004–05	2005–06	Total (£000)
Acklington	280	9	308	1,809	2,117
Albany	34	120	96	137	233
Ashwell	—	—	347	0	347
Askham Grange	—	—	37	0	37
Aylesbury	36	—	2,790	115	2,905
Bedford	528	13	528	13	541
Belmarsh	371	12	566	12	568
Birmingham	770	767	3,134	966	4,100
Blantyre House	388	21	388	21	409
Blundeston	1,051	245	1,051	245	1,296
Brinsford	—	—	931	37	968
Bristol	5	390	138	430	568
Brixton	1,393	46	1,693	6,697	8,390
Brockhill	—	—	4,175	91	4,266
BuckleyHall	375	24	1,241	54	1,295
Bullingdon	49	—	49	0	49
Bullwood Hall	1,384	250	1,630	263	1,893
Camp Hill	764	19	921	19	940
Canterbury	25	148	3,175	2,976	6,151
Cardiff	316	22	1,219	129	1,348
Castington	3	800	243	825	1,068
Channings Wood	1,093	38	1,779	58	1,837
Chelmsford	319	544	739	695	1,434
Coldingley	196	—	196	0	196
Cookham Wood	188	162	188	162	350
Dartmoor	385	1,515	6,958	5,948	12,906
Deerbolt	205	6	464	49	513
Dorchester	268	211	364	211	575
Dover	830	242	1,304	258	1,562
Downview	—	290	6,217	2,516	8,733
Drake Hall	—	300	530	382	912
Durham	28	—	3,911	4,250	8,161

Prison Service maintenance/refurbishment—Future years

Establishments	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*Total (£000)*
East Sutton Park	900	333	1,243	346	1,589
Eastwood Park	128	—	185	0	185
Edmunds Hill	308	10	308	10	318
Elmley	693	21	693	21	714
Erlestoke	37	—	416	37	453
Everthorpe	30	—	867	20	887
Exeter	—	1,150	0	1,150	1,150
Featherstone	996	375	996	375	1,371
Feltham	165	449	3,790	1,343	5,133
Ford	—	—	0	0	0
Foston Hall	383	—	383	0	383
Frankland	—	1,100	2,775	1,675	4,450
Full Sutton	278	1,766	353	1,768	2,121
Garth	—	—	26	0	26
Gartree	860	4,000	1,239	6,900	8,139
Glen Parva	181	966	181	966	1,147
Gloucester	332	114	332	114	446
Grendon	2,049	404	2,049	404	2,453
Guys Marsh	391	735	427	735	1,162
Haslar	666	17	666	17	683
Haverigg	—	—	49	0	49
Hewell Grange	—	310	0	310	310
High Down	1,883	1,813	1,883	1,813	3,696
Highpoint South	101	2	2,434	52	2,486
Hindley	—	—	1,738	953	2,691
Hollesley Bay	711	365	711	365	1,076
Holloway	2,812	2,459	3,162	5,943	9,105
Huntercombe	—	350	0	350	350
Holme House	69	165	427	217	644
Hull	34	—	34	0	34
Kingston	—	—	1,571	46	1,617
Kirkham	—	—	133	0	133
Kirklevington	511	15	572	15	587
Lancaster Castle	—	—	0	0	0
Lancaster Farms	—	—	1,238	50	1,288
Latchmere House	—	300	0	300	300
Leeds	800	1,214	830	1,214	2,044
Leicester	1,106	118	1,106	118	1,224
Lewes	826	18	864	3,518	4,382
Leyhill	—	336	0	336	336
Lincoln	—	220	6,799	3,964	10,763
Lindholme	484	426	674	455	1,129
Littlehey	519	12	519	12	531
Liverpool	—	—	1,709	7,000	8,709
Long Lartin	1,020	30	1,850	47	1,897
Low Newton	—	313	0	313	313
Maidstone	1,922	788	3,316	824	4,140
Manchester	415	664	415	664	1,079
Moorland	20	40	770	522	1,292
Morton Hall	354	95	354	95	449
Mount	478	11	478	11	489
New Hall	—	—	1,834	46	1,880
North Sea Camp	208	144	208	144	352
Northallerton	538	156	568	156	724
Norwich	214	162	3,013	1,376	4,389
Nottingham	420	461	420	461	881
Onley	1,116	2,602	1,648	2,618	4,266
Parkhurst	1,165	34	1,789	819	2,608
Pentonville	2,137	2,031	6,234	4,055	10,289
Portland	20	293	4,157	5,859	10,016
Prescoed	—	—	0	0	0
Preston	5,612	3,180	5,612	3,180	8,792
Ranby	117	—	117	0	117
Reading	314	—	314	0	314
Risley	—	—	34	0	34
Rochester	533	18	533	18	551
Send	—	—	0	0	0
Shepton Mallet	592	1,308	1,492	2,808	4,300
Shrewsbury	—	488	208	497	705
Spring Hill	288	15	288	15	303
Stafford	937	21	2,040	55	2,095
Standford Hill	1,764	654	1,764	654	2,418
Stocken	80	—	80	0	80

Prison Service maintenance/refurbishment—Future years

Establishments	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*Total (£000)*
Stoke Heath	1,146	504	1,806	536	2,342
Styal	210	164	710	164	874
Sudbury	—	—	0	0	0
Swaleside	144	420	144	420	564
Swansea	2,185	858	2,201	858	3,059
Swinfen Hall	393	224	393	224	617
The Verne	1,261	136	1,261	136	1,397
Thorn Cross	—	—	0	0	0
Usk	472	2,900	472	2,900	3,372
Wakefield	—	730	7,483	3,630	11,113
Wandsworth	753	5,900	1,189	15,915	17,104
Wayland	236	698	236	698	934
Wealstun	3,796	858	3,796	858	4,654
Weare	—	—	0	0	0
Wellingborough	—	—	15	25	40
Werrington	—	—	0	0	0
Wetherby	1,800	100	1,830	100	1,930
Whatton	76		76	0	76
Whitemoor	2	195	353	203	556
Winchester	1,781	776	4,362	1,021	5,383
Woodhill	—	—	167	33	200
Wormwood Scrubs	386	715	820	1,715	2,535
Wymott	103		103	0	103
Totals	—	—	157,635	126,953	284,588

Note:
Figures are construction costs, excluding professional fees.
The additional accommodation programme and associated ancillaries are not included.
Minor maintenance works undertaken locally are also excluded.
The figures show current programmed work and may be adjusted and further work added.

Mrs. Ann Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the estimated cost of the backlog in maintenance for each prison establishment is; and if he will make a statement. [160751]

Paul Goggins: The estimated cost of identified maintenance is as follows:

Prison Service—Estimated Outstanding Maintenance

Establishment	*Estimated Outturn*
Acklington	8,459
Albany	12,409
Ashwell	2,444
Askham Grange	1,081
Aylesbury	5,515
Bedford	3,245
Belmarsh	349
Birmingham	7,186
Blakenhurst	31
Blantyre House	1,311
Blundeston	2,160
Brinsford	5,104
Bristol	7,701
Brixton	3,936
Brockhill	3,540
Buckley Hall	1,501
Bullingdon	3,678
Bullwood Hall	2,668
Camp Hill	3,950
Camp Hill Farm	293
Canterbury	4,032
Cardiff	6,933
Castington	4,517
Channings Wood	2,389
Chelmsford	5,248
Coldingley	4,644
Cookham Wood	376
Dartmoor	6,653
Deerbolt	2,843

Prison Service—Estimated Outstanding Maintenance

Establishment	*Estimated Outturn*
Dorchester	7,315
Dover	3,739
Downview	2,942
Drake Hall	2,164
Durham	1,379
East Sutton Park	2,625
Eastwood Park	359
Edmunds Hill	1,993
Elmley	206
Erlestoke	4,239
Everthorpe	3,967
Exeter	4,349
Featherstone	19,454
Feltham	5,633
Ford	4,658
Foston Hall	836
Frankland Hall	2,039
Full Sutton	3,061
Garth	1,897
Gartree	5,692
Glen Parva	13,760
Gloucester	3,060
Grendon	6,306
Guys Marsh	8,026
Haslar	1,367
Haverigg	4,318
Hewell Grange	3,905
High Down	3,841
Highpoint South	3,246
Hindley	1,356
Hollesley Bay	2,922
Holloway	16,066
Holme House	1,983
Hull	4,289
Huntercombe	2,870
Kingston	2,439
Kirkham	3,037

Prison Service—Estimated Outstanding Maintenance

Establishment	*Estimated Outturn*
Kirklevington	1,263
Lancaster Castle	5,489
Lancaster Farms	1,026
Latchmere House	958
Leeds	8,873
Leicester	5,011
Lewes	6,680
Leyhill	3,407
Lincoln	3,287
Lindholme	4,518
Littlehey	5,697
Liverpool	12,382
Long Lartin	1,488
Low Newton	1,001
Maidstone	7,080
Manchester	4,353
Moorland	1,142
Moorland Open	965
Morton Hall	629
Mount	3,482
New Hall	5,099
Newbold Revel	2,705
North Sea Camp	5,184
Northallerton	1,054
Norwich	6,199
Nottingham	2,841
Onley	9,941
Parkhurst	6,896
Pentonville	1,425
Portland	12,421
Prescoed	3,343
Preston	881
Ranby	3,066
Reading	2,324
Risley	11,847
Rochester	1,184
Send	2,173
Shepton Mallett	5,231
Shrewsbury	13,414
Spring Hill	6,293
Stafford	14,451
Standford Hill	13,207
Stocken	6,149
Stoke Heath	17,362
Styal	4,025
Sudbury	249
Swaleside	2,116
Swansea	2,726
Swinfen Hall	2,231
Thorn Cross	528
Usk	2,333
Verne	13,011
Wakefield	11,242
Wandsworth	17,779
Wayland	1,534
Wealstun	556
Wealstun (closed)	1,353
Wellingborough	13,361
Werrington	2,035
Wetherby	2,014
Whatton	1,253
Whitemoor	481
Winchester	7,617
Wormwood Scrubs	6,783
Wymott	7,616
Total	609,798

Probation

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether probation hostels in England and Wales will be subject to contestability following the creation of the National Offender Management Service. [161175]

Paul Goggins: The structure of the National Offender Management Service is yet to be finalised. As part of the implementation of the Reducing Crime—Changing Lives reforms details of contestability and the arrangements for the management of probation hostels in England and Wales are being developed.

Science Strategy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken to enhance science in his Department since the publication of the Government's science strategy, Investing in Innovation. [162249]

Ms Blears: The Home Office continues to ensure that science and technology make a significant contribution to the delivery of the Department's aims. Our new Strategic Plan commits the Department to a more proactive use of science, technology and research to drive policy and practice. The appointment of our Chief Scientific Advisor has enabled a more strategic management and focus of science on policy priorities. The Forward Look entry summarises our significant investment in hard science, social science and data flows.

As far as innovation specifically is concerned, we try as far as possible to ensure that Intellectual Property Rights in research commissioned by the Home Office remains with the researcher and to work in partnership with commercial companies on development projects. Some restrictions on this are sometimes necessary in so far as it would not be in the national interest to share our research activity. However, management of knowledge and innovation will be key, especially since in many areas we are looking to a wider range of providers and more innovative ways of delivering services. Since its launch in July 2002, the Investing in Innovation strategy has provided the opportunity for the department to work more closely with the science base in co-operation with the research councils. In particular, the Home Office has excellent links with Economic Social Research Council and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. We have been working closely with the latter to support the crime prevention programme. We have established a structure to ensure that our Public Sector Research Establishment—the Forensic Science Service—is fully engaged in effective knowledge transfer in the spirit of the Baker report.

It is vital that we pursue our objectives in partnership with other Government departments, academia and the private sector and this approach will be at the heart of our science and innovation strategy.

Sentencing Statistics

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he proposes that the

Sentencing Guidelines Council should have a role in *(a)* reducing sentence lengths and *(b)* less serious offenders being jailed. [160803]

Paul Goggins: The work of the Sentencing Guidelines Council will lead to a greater consistency in sentencing around the country. The Government has made it clear that prison should be used only for the most serious, dangerous and persistent offenders.

Shoplifting

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women were imprisoned for shoplifting offences in each criminal justice area in 2002. [155064]

Paul Goggins: The information in the following table gives the number of persons sentenced and sentenced to immediate custody for "stealing from shops and stalls", by gender and criminal justice system area, England and Wales 2002.

It should be noted that courts' sentencing decisions are influenced by the seriousness of the offence and take into account previous convictions.

Number of persons sentenced and sentenced to immediate custody at all courts for "Stealing from shops and stalls", by sex and criminal justice system area England and Wales 2002[1] [2]

	Males		*Females*		*Total*	
Criminal justice system area	*Sentenced*	*Sentenced to immediate custody*	*Sentenced*	*Sentenced to immediate custody*	*Sentenced*	*Sentenced to immediate custody*
Avon and Somerset	1,442	373	426	63	1,868	436
Bedfordshire	703	221	225	47	928	268
Cambridgeshire	633	82	220	15	853	97
Cheshire	1,097	226	372	52	1,469	278
Cleveland	1,267	162	482	43	1,749	205
Cumbria	486	69	166	13	652	82
Derbyshire	999	265	270	42	1,269	307
Devon and Cornwall	1,363	183	353	28	1,716	211
Dorset	696	197	186	37	882	234
Durham	726	125	255	42	981	167
Essex	1,252	414	379	72	1,631	486
Gloucestershire	593	95	221	15	814	110
Greater Manchester	3,540	870	1,197	175	4,737	1,045
Hampshire	1,877	299	577	36	2,454	335
Hertfordshire	713	167	253	32	966	199
Humberside	1,248	301	382	41	1,630	342
Kent	1,917	539	607	85	2,524	624
Lancashire	2,035	424	771	93	2,806	517
Leicestershire	1,011	187	298	22	1,309	209
Lincolnshire	731	107	228	25	959	132
Merseyside	2,307	422	1,012	172	3,319	594
London[2]	9,111	2,730	2,605	518	11,716	3,248
Norfolk	796	130	247	17	1,043	147
Northamptonshire	649	165	186	27	835	192
Northumbria	1,937	347	791	101	2,728	448
North Yorkshire	698	122	259	22	957	144
Nottinghamshire	1,480	312	551	73	2,031	385
South Yorkshire	1,964	528	631	87	2,595	615
Staffordshire	1,037	267	345	67	1,382	334
Suffolk	550	98	189	14	739	112
Surrey	515	66	143	5	658	71
Sussex	1,317	345	371	60	1,688	405
Thames Valley	1,691	292	562	65	2,253	357
Warwickshire	399	84	112	8	511	92
West Mercia	1,037	247	285	27	1,322	274
West Midlands	4,016	1,020	1,395	211	5,411	1,231
West Yorkshire	2,919	932	961	201	3,880	1,133
Wiltshire	556	92	206	15	762	107
Dyfed Powys	268	33	83	3	351	36
Gwent	505	65	216	11	721	76
North Wales	722	123	238	18	960	141
South Wales	1,271	166	500	37	1,771	203
England and Wales	60,074	13,892	19,756	2,737	79,830	16,629

[1] These data are on the principal

[2] Includes the Metroplitan Police and the City of London

Traffic Officers

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* traffic enforcement officers, *(b)* traffic wardens and *(c)* council parking attendants were operating in each police authority area in each year since 1999–2000. [163130]

Caroline Flint: There is no group specifically designated as traffic enforcement officers. Provision for Highways Agency traffic officers is included in the Traffic Management Bill currently before Parliament.

The number of traffic wardens employed by each of the police authorities in England and Wales for the last four years is given in the table attached.

No record is kept centrally of the number of parking attendants employed by local authorities or by contractors who carry out enforcement on their behalf.

Selected Indicators
Traffic Wardens

Values	*1999-00*	*2000-01*	*2001-02*	*2002-03*
Forces				
Avon and Somerset	59	48	44	43
Bedfordshire	9	3	3	2
Cambridgeshire	35	38	36	35
Cheshire	25	20	20	19
City of London	0	0	0	0
Cleveland	13	10	12	7
Cumbria	6	0	0	0
Derbyshire	50	44	50	48
Devon and Cornwall	119	110	101	103
Dorset	41	37	12	0
Durham	22	19	19	15
Dyfed-Powys	14	15	12	13
Essex	102	82	59	38
Gloucestershire	35	30	30	31
Greater Manchester	96	88	87	88
Gwent	30	28	28	27
Hampshire	53	53	31	25
Hertfordshire	38	45	42	35
Humberside	53	51	51	48
Kent	1	0	0	0
Lancashire	94	87	84	50
Leicestershire	67	65	72	61
Lincolnshire	20	21	21	21
Merseyside	106	93	63	52
Metropolitan Police	817	689	632	687
Norfolk	37	33	34	33
Northamptonshire	16	11	7	7
Northumbria	70	72	71	59
North Wales	12	12	8	7
North Yorkshire	19	12	10	0
Nottinghamshire	58	39	30	29
South Wales	100	104	100	99
South Yorkshire	62	71	77	68
Staffordshire	24	17	12	10
Suffolk	31	29	29	25
Surrey	16	25	20	17
Sussex	110	98	62	61
Thames Valley	58	45	51	42
Warwickshire	8	9	9	9
West Mercia	30	23	21	15
West Midlands	175	128	78	74
West Yorkshire	116	107	99	98
Wiltshire	15	7	7	7

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many traffic wardens there are in *(a)* Avon and Somerset and *(b)* Devon and Cornwall. [161863]

Caroline Flint: The number of traffic wardens employed by the police authorities in *(a)* Avon and Somerset and *(b)* Devon and Cornwall for the financial year 2002 to 2003 were 43 and 103 respectively.

Under the provisions of the Road Traffic Act 1991, local authorities can apply for parking restrictions in their areas to be decriminalised and enforced by the authority under civil law. Many have now done so and this has led to a marked decline in traffic warden numbers. In Avon and Somerset the local authorities for Bath & NE Somerset, Taunton Deane, and Bristol now have decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) schemes. In Devon and Cornwall only Plymouth local authority is covered by DPE powers.

Wormwood Scrubs

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the payments of compensation as a result of claims against HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs in the last 10 years for which figures are available, broken down by perceived ethnic background of the complainant, including the Irish community and the Gypsy and Traveller community. [155657]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 2 March 2004]:* A list of payments made is set out in the table. Data are not centrally collated to separately identify claimants from the Gypsy and Traveller community. These figures do not include claims for loss of property or accidents.

As at 11 February 2004

Ethnicity	*Amount (£)*
Black	30,000
White	9,000
White	42,000
Black-African	20,000
Black	22,000
White	100,500
Arabic-Algeria	20,000
White	24,500
Irish	28,000
White	23,250
White	20,000
Irish	71,560
White	20,000
White	18,000
Black-Caribbean[1]	1,000
Black	24,000
White	8,000
White	22,000
White	22,500
Irish	20,000
White-Scottish	22,000
White	4,000
Black	22,500
White	20,000
Black-Caribbean	20,000
White	10,000
Polish	41,000
Black	27,000
White	25,000
Black	19,000
Black	20,000
White	24,000
Black-African	55,000
Irish	32,500
White	17,000
Irish[2]	2,000
Black	27,000

As at 11 February 2004

Ethnicity	*Amount (£)*
Black	6,500
Polish	20,000
White	55,000
White	13,500
Black	5,000
Black	33,750
Arabic-African	15,000

As at 11 February 2004

Ethnicity	*Amount (£)*
White	20,000
Black	25,000
Black	13,000
White	14,000
Total	1,137,060

[1] Damages: £1000 interim payment.
[2] Interim payment.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 24 March 2004

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Badgers/Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total cost of the road traffic accident badger survey has been from its inception to date. [158335]

Mr. Bradshaw: The total cost of the road traffic accident badger survey to date is £218,000.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research is being undertaken on badger to cattle transmission of M. bovis via cattle feed troughs. [158337]

Mr. Bradshaw: Research by the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) has shown that in the Woodchester Park study area some badgers regularly obtained feed from cattle troughs. In addition, badgers have been recorded defecating and urinating in troughs. Ongoing research at CSL aims to identify the seasonal and frequency of trough-use by badgers on cattle farms throughout the south-west of England. The results of this research will be reported to Defra in December 2005.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the responses are of badger groups confronted with shortages of primary foods arising from population pressure in terms of *(a)* selectivity of diet and *(b)* foraging distance. [158338]

Mr. Bradshaw: The primary food of the badger in Britain is the earthworm. These do not represent a limiting resource across much of Britain, especially the south-west, due to their super-abundance. However, they may not be available to badgers under some conditions such as during periods of dry weather. Therefore, badgers are unlikely to be confronted with food shortages as a result of increasing population size alone. When earthworms are not available badgers are forced to select other food sources and will forage greater distances to obtain these. Being generalist opportunists, badgers will consume a wide variety of foods. These include many invertebrates, plant roots, fruits, cereals, animal carcases and stored livestock feed. Food shortages may encourage badgers to forage at greater distances from their setts, although there is no quantitative data on this.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether badger carcases on the roadside reported by members of the public are included in the road traffic accident badger survey. [158625]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Road Traffic Accident (RTA) survey only operates in the seven English counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Hereford, Gloucestershire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. Defra staff endeavour to collect any badgers reported by members of the public from roadsides within those counties. Not all badgers collected are suitable for post mortem examination, and only those that are suitable can provide data for the survey.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff are employed in the collection of badgers killed in road traffic accidents; and what the average period is between a report of a carcase being received and a collection being made. [158627]

Mr. Bradshaw: The road traffic accident survey (RTA) of badgers killed by motor vehicles in seven English counties was operated by the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) from June 2002 to end of February 2004. CSL had two full-time staff involved in the collection of RTA badgers (in peak periods another member of staff assisted), and typically a carcase would be collected within 24 hours of being reported.

Defra's Wildlife Unit (WLU) is now operating the RTA survey, and intends to involve up to four staff daily, as necessary, in the task of collecting carcases. All other travelling WLU staff, however, may also collect such carcases, as an ancillary action to their primary work tasks. The WLU will aim to collect such carcases within one working day of their notification.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of bovine TB control programmes undertaken without the active co-operation of farmers. [157939]

Mr. Bradshaw: No such assessment has been made, but the co-operation of farmers is vital for a TB control programme in cattle to be effective.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of other causes to which the reduction in bovine TB could be attributed in the Thornbury experiment, other than the clearance of badgers. [157949]

Mr. Bradshaw: The fundamental difference between the Thornbury area and other areas in south west England, where bovine tuberculosis was a problem, was the systematic removal badgers from the Thornbury area. No other species was similarly removed. No other contemporaneous change was identified that could have accounted for the reduction in TB incidence within the area.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her assessment is of the effect of anti-trial activity on the success rate of badger trapping during the Krebs trials. [157954]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not possible to assess accurately the effect of anti-trial activity on the success of badger trapping, as there are no control data with which to draw a comparison. However, it is likely that such

activity has had a negative impact on the success rate, and has certainly led to some trapping operations being prematurely suspended or extended.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will estimate the number of injuries to *(a)* cattle owners, *(b)* keepers and *(c)* stockmen which will be sustained as a result of the enhanced testing programme. [157958]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Health and Safety Executive do not hold specific data on the number of accidents occurring on farms that can be directly attributed to the current TB testing programme. Therefore it would not be possible to estimate the number of injuries resultant of any changes to the TB testing programme.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the prevalence of TB in cattle is higher on organic holdings than on those where cattle are housed intensively. [158021]

Mr. Bradshaw: The TB99 epidemiological questionnaire has been designed to assess factors that might predispose herds to a TB breakdown, and their relative importance. The form includes questions on organic herd status. To date, no finalised analyses have been made, but analyses of pre-Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak data and of data collected in 2002 are in progress. The results will be published later this year.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with her counterparts in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* Wales on the control of bovine TB; and what the outcome was of those consultations. [158330]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are regular discussions at official level on bovine TB issues. A subject of recent discussions has been the consultation exercise "Preparing for a new GB strategy on bovine tuberculosis".

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what evidence she has collated on whether poor standards of animal health and welfare in cattle husbandry contribute to the increases in bovine TB in cattle. [158331]

Mr. Bradshaw: An Independent Husbandry Panel was set up by MAFF on 17 January 2000, in response to a recommendation of the Agriculture Select Committee (in April 1999) for a working party to be established to review the available scientific evidence on husbandry, and the role it might play in controlling bovine TB. Factors considered by the Panel included health and welfare aspects such as physiological state and concurrent diseases. Its report was published by MAFF in 2000.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what resources devoted to the Krebs reactive trials have been transferred to the Krebs proactive trials. [158333]

Mr. Bradshaw: Wildlife unit staff and equipment have always been deployed on all elements of the culling trial; no particular element is ring-fenced and resources will therefore not specifically be re-directed to proactive culling following the cessation of the reactive culling work.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what adverse effects have been observed in cattle subject to continuous 60-day TB testing; and whether this has been accompanied by a higher rate of *(a)* abortion, *(b)* premature calving and *(c)* early embryonic loss. [158499]

Mr. Bradshaw: No adverse effects have been observed in cattle subjected to 60-day (short-interval) tuberculin testing.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what consultations she has had with *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* their representative bodies on the resource implications arising from the enforcement of the proposed Tuberculosis (England) Order; [158501]

(2) what estimate she has made of the costs to local authorities of enforcing the proposed Tuberculosis (England) Order 2004 in the first five years of its application. [158573]

Mr. Bradshaw: Consideration of the costs to local government will be considered fully in the final Regulatory Impact Assessment for the proposed new Tuberculosis (England) Order 2004.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the cost to UK farmers of a levy to fund compensation payments in respect of slaughtered TB reactors. [158572]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have not made such an estimate but as a general principle our proposal is that farmers would pay into a levy fund to meet half of the projected costs associated with disease control, including compensation. However, no decision has been taken on whether the levy would cover endemic diseases such as TB, or indeed what costs would be covered. These issues will be in the consultation document on the levy proposals that we are working on.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 247–8W, on bovine TB, whether TB reactors that are negative on culture are considered to have been infected with M.bovis bacilli. [158589]

Mr. Bradshaw: Cattle reacting to the intradermal comparative test are considered to be affected by bovine tuberculosis, regardless of culture results. The main reason for carrying out bacteriological tests in those animals is to identify, for epidemiological purposes, the strain of M. bovis responsible for the infection rather than to validate the skin test results.

There are several reasons why reactors may be negative on culture:

A very small proportion (0.5 per cent. or less according to the veterinary literature) of reactors without visible TB lesions can be caused by bacteria closely related to the M. bovis bacillus.

Cellular immune responses (which give rise to the skin test response) will be evident at earlier stages following infection than the pathological changes caused by the disease (e.g. visible lesions), and probably before bacterial loads are sufficiently large to be found by standard culture methods.

M. bovis is a fastidious organism to grow in the laboratory, so culture methods are less sensitive than the skin test.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what basis the Independent Science Group concluded that interference in the Krebs trials had had no discernible impact on the statistical integrity of the trials. [158596]

Mr. Bradshaw: The main technique used by the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISG) for monitoring whether badger densities in the trial areas are consistent with the treatments, the 20 per cent. surveys of trial areas, showed that badger activity levels changed in line with the treatment given (proactive, reactive or survey-only). Furthermore, the ISG carried out various statistical analyses on the data from the reactive and survey-only areas of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial. These have shown a consistent effect of reactive culling across trial areas.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who was in charge of the conduct of the Thornbury trial; and what his or her current position is. [158597]

Mr. Bradshaw: Dr. Harry Thompson was in charge of the conduct of the Thornbury Trial. He is now retired.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her best estimate is of the number of badgers killed during the Thornbury trial. [158599]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not possible to give a number. The method of culling, gassing, meant many badgers died underground and could not be recovered.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cattle herds in heavily infected areas have demonstrated resistance to TB infection; and what explanation has been adduced for this phenomenon. [158603]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are many possible reasons why some herds in heavily infected areas remain uninfected. Since 1994, approximately 70 per cent. of herds in current yearly tested parishes have had no confirmed breakdown. The TB99 epidemiological survey is investigating risk factors. The next report of the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB will include some results from the analysis of TB99 data from before the foot and mouth disease outbreak and, possibly, more recent (2002) data.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the badger population of the Isle of Wight is; what its health status is; and whether TB herd breakdowns have been reported on the island in the last five years. [158607]

Mr. Bradshaw: We do not have an estimate for the current badger population on the Isle of Wight; nor do we have information on its health status.

The number of new bovine tuberculosis (TB) breakdowns on the Isle of Wight in the last five years is given in the following table.

	Number of new TB breakdowns
1999	[1]1
2000	0
2001	0
2002	[2]1
2003	[2]1

[1] TB confirmed.

[2] TB not confirmed by post-mortem or culture results.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average cost per Krebs area was of the Krebs trials. [158657]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not possible to give a realistic figure for the average cost of a Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT) area. This is due to a number of factors such as the differences in treatment ascribed to the RBCT areas, the differences in enrolment time of the RBCT areas, and the number and type of culling operations carried out.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what appeal mechanisms are available to applicants for a Section 10 licence under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 in the event that an application is refused. [158664]

Mr. Bradshaw: In the first instance appeals should be made to the Wildlife Administration Unit of the National Wildlife Management Team (part of the Rural Development Service) who are responsible for issuing licences under this legislation. Each appeal is assessed to determine the basis on which it has been made and is then handled accordingly.

If the appeal relates to the policy of the Department in implementing the legislation, it is passed to the Wildlife Integration and Conservation Team within the European Wildlife Division for a response. If the issues cannot be resolved satisfactorily the appeal is passed to the Head of the European Wildlife Division (Defra, Floor 1 Zone 10/D, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EB).

If the appeal involves how the applicant or case were dealt with, it would be passed to the Team Manager of the National Wildlife Management Team to investigate and respond (RDS, Burghill Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, BS10 6NJ). If the issue(s) cannot be resolved the case is forwarded to the Department Impartial Complaint Adjudicator (Defra, Area 7E, 9 Millbank, c/o Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR). The Adjudicator will determine whether the correct procedures have been followed and if the outcome was appropriate.

This appeal mechanism will be considered as part of the ongoing public consultation into the procedures that the Department adopts in handling applications under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many herds have suffered repeat breakdowns since 1997. [158676]

Mr. Bradshaw: Since 1 January 1998, 2,413[1] herds have suffered repeat breakdowns.

[1] Provisional data downloaded from the State Veterinary Service database on 4–5 March 2004. Subject to change as more data becomes available.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff are employed in tracing cattle from farm movement

books after a new breakdown; how many years back such traces go; and what the success rate is in tracing suspect cattle. [158682]

Mr. Bradshaw: The number of staff involved in each tracing will depend on how many movements there have been associated with a TB breakdown. In most cases, a new TB breakdown is allocated to a case Veterinary Officer, who is responsible for prioritising and initiating tracings from the herd. In addition, there is at least one person in each Animal Health Divisional Office who is recognised as having a specialist interest and ability in dealing with tracing work.

The start point for tracings is usually the last clear test. How many years back traces go will depend on the testing history of the traced herds.

It is not possible to give a figure regarding the rate of success in tracing cattle except at disproportionate cost.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures her Department is taking to combat bovine TB. [162030]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government have a five-point strategy for dealing with bovine TB, based on the recommendations of the Krebs report 1997:

Protecting human health

Testing cattle for TB and putting controls in place

Developing a TB vaccine

Carrying out research into how bovine TB is spread

Carrying out a badger culling trial.

On 9 February, the Government launched a consultation on proposals for short term cattle-based measures to prevent the further geographical spread of bovine TB. The consultation also seeks views on the key principles on which a new long-term strategy for tackling bovine TB will be developed. The consultation period ends on 4 May 2004.

Feline TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what requirement there is on veterinary investigation centres to examine the carcases of domestic cats for the presence of TB when submitted by private veterinary surgeons. [158334]

Mr. Bradshaw: Carcases of any domestic cats submitted to VLA Regional Laboratories are examined for TB as part of the standard post-mortem protocols. If TB is suspected by the submitting veterinarian or if characteristic lesions of TB are found in the course of the post-mortem examination at VLA, appropriate samples will be taken for histological and bacteriological tests to confirm the presence of "Mycobacterium bovis". Confirmatory TB tests are carried out free of charge to the submitting veterinarian.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to make TB in domestic cats a notifiable disease. [158341]

Mr. Bradshaw: As set out in the consultation document launched by the Department last 9 February, we are proposing an amendment to the Tuberculosis (England and Wales) Order 1984, which will make the isolation of "M. bovis" notifiable in any mammal other than humans.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether charges are imposed on private veterinary surgeons who submit the carcases of domestic cats to veterinary investigation centres for post mortem examination for the presence of TB. [158626]

Mr. Bradshaw: Carcases of any domestic cats submitted to VLA Regional Laboratories are examined for TB as part of the standard post-mortem protocols. If TB is suspected by the submitting veterinarian or if characteristic lesions of TB are found in the course of the post mortem examination at VLA, appropriate samples will be taken for histological and bacteriological tests to confirm the presence of "Mycobacterium bovis".

Confirmatory TB tests are carried out free of charge to the submitting veterinarian.

Fisheries

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the scientific justification was for the reduction in the 2004 haddock total allowable catch allocation for the Rockall Haddock fishery. [161993]

Mr. Bradshaw: The scientific advice was for catches of Rockall haddock in 2004 to be reduced to the lowest possible level. The full advice is available in the autumn 2003 report of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Management (ACFM), which may be found on the website of the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) at www.ices.dk.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the current condition is of the West of Scotland Nephrops stock. [161994]

Mr. Bradshaw: The ICES advice from October 2003 was that West of Scotland stocks of Nephrops are exploited at sustainable levels. Advice for the Nephrops stocks alone was that a TAG of 11,300 tonnes was appropriate, and the TAG for 2004 was set at that figure.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether survey findings reliant on data obtained using the Granton trawl are comparable with findings reliant on data obtained using the GOV trawl; [161995]

(2) what the differences are in the characteristics between the GOV and Granton trawls in terms of their respective ability to catch cod; [161996]

(3) when the Granton trawl used by UK survey vessels in the North sea was replaced by the GOV trawl; [161997]

(4) pursuant to her answer of 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1300W, on fisheries, whether the GOV trawl used by North sea survey vessels is optimised for the catching of cod. [162024]

Mr. Bradshaw: The autumn North sea fisheries survey undertaken by CEFAS changed to the GOV (Grande Ouverture Verticale) trawl from 1992. The survey gear predominantly targets roundfish but also samples a wide range of other commercial fish. Consequently the gear is not designed to target only cod. Nevertheless, the GOV trawl is more efficient at catching cod than the Granton trawl it replaced. Both gears show a very truncated age distribution, with few mature cod. Before the change to the GOV gear the cod stock had seriously declined, and in the early 1990s the advice from ICES was that strong measures were needed to protect the cod, including direct reductions in fishing effort. Results from the two gears, albeit at different times, are comparable.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what her estimate is of the proportion of North Sea fish stocks which have gravitated to oil and gas rig exclusion areas and are not accessible to commercial fisherman; [161998]

(2) what account is taken of the gravitation of commercial fish species to oil and gas pipelines and rigs in the conduct of abundance surveys. [162031]

Mr. Bradshaw: This is not a well researched area but one North Sea study concluded that an oil platform had attracted cod and saithe, leaving a zone around the platform where fish density was lower. Even so, the total quantity was negligible compared to regional or even local fish stocks. On this limited basis it does not appear that the aggregation of cod and saithe by platforms is likely to have a significant effect on the availability of fish.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to what extent the previous year's landing of any specific fish species influences the setting of total allowable catches. [161999]

Mr. Bradshaw: Data on landings of commercial fish species are one important source of information for international assessments of such species. These assessments provide the basis for scientific advice on total allowable catches.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what adjustments are made to landing figures of fish species to account for *(a)* discards and *(b)* under-reporting in order to estimate the true levels of fishing mortality; and whether those adjustments have been constant in recent years. [162000]

Mr. Bradshaw: Data on discards are included in only some annual assessments where sampling is such as to provide an adequate estimate of the discards. Scientists at ICES use the best information at their disposal in the stock assessments, and this may include information on under-reporting or misreporting. The magnitude will depend upon the circumstances of any one year.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what corrections are applied to bottom trawl survey catch figures to adjust for the catchability limitations of the gear used. [162001]

Mr. Bradshaw: The current assessment techniques use catch-rates of commercial and research fleets. Each survey is used independently, and hence no corrections are necessary.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the implications of Council Regulation (EC) No 1954/2003 of 4 November 2003, on the management of the fishing effort relating to certain community fishing areas, are for UK fishermen. [162002]

Mr. Bradshaw: Council Regulation 1954/2003 introduces a new fishing effort management regime for Western Waters in place of that contained in Council Regulation 685/95. It extends the scope of the regime from vessels over 18 metres overall length to vessels over 15 metres overall length but no longer applies to vessels fishing for deep-water species which are now subject to separate management arrangements. The hailing in and out arrangements contained in the previous regime have been removed except in a newly created biologically sensitive area off the south-west coast of Ireland. The Council will agree new effort ceilings for Member States later this year. The new arrangements do not affect the ability of UK registered vessels over 15 metres to fish in western waters. Fisheries Departments will monitor overall fishing effort against the ceilings set by Council. Where an effort ceiling is in danger of being breached licences will be varied to prohibit fishing in the relevant area. No such licence variations have proved necessary since the previous regime was introduced in 1995.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1148W, on fish stocks, what assessment she has made of the accuracy of scientific assessments of the levels of fish stocks. [162019]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 136W.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1148W, on fish stocks, what scientific investigations have been carried out to determine the migration patterns of North Sea cod. [162021]

Mr. Bradshaw: There has been extensive tagging of cod to determine their migration and movements. These data form the basis for the current assessment and management areas for cod.

Since 1999, CEFAS has released cod tagged with electronic tags that allow more detailed information to be derived. The work has recently been expanded under a joint Defra/EU funded program (CODYSSEY) that is investigating movements and behaviour of cod over a wide part of the NE Atlantic including the North Sea. The technology is also being used in a current R&D programme which will help to show how cod respond to variations in food supply.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) pursuant to her answer of 10 February 2004, *Official Report*,

column 1300W, on fisheries, what assessment she has made of the reason for the reduced cod recruitment in the North Sea since the 1980s; [162023]

(2) pursuant to her answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 134W, on fisheries, what investigations she has carried out to determine the effect of environmental change and species interactions because of increased water temperature in the North Sea. [162025]

Mr. Bradshaw: Two key factors are affecting recruitment of cod. First, the size of the cod stock itself, as fewer adult cod give fewer young. Secondly, the environment, through the planktonic food chain, affects the survival from eggs to "recruits". Sea temperature is often used as an index of such environmental changes. Defra are funding research into the links between the environment and recruitment, as illustrated in the recently publicised article in Nature. However, it is the first we have to manage. ICES advice is that if the environment is also causing reduced recruitments then managers have to be even more cautious.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 135W, on fisheries, on what evidence scientists have based their advice that over the last 20 years the fishing rate on cod has been five times that required to promote optimal use of the cod stock. [162026]

Mr. Bradshaw: ICES assessments show that recent fishing rates on cod have been about 60 per cent. per annum ("F of 1.0"). This is over three times the rate needed to achieve the maximum sustainable yield per recruit (MSY) ($F = 0.3$) and five times that needed to achieve the bioeconomic optimum F0.1 ($F_{0.1} = 0.2$).

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 496W, on fisheries, in what direction in the vertical plane cod seek to escape towed trawl nets; and what the equivalent behaviour is of haddock. [162035]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1152W.

Flood Defences

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what changes have been made to the criteria used by the Environment Agency to determine priorities for investment in flood defences in each of the last five years; and on what basis these changes were made. [154914]

Margaret Beckett: For grant-aided capital investment the Environment Agency uses Defra's priority scoring system, which applies to all flood and coastal defence operating authorities. The system was introduced on a pilot basis in 1997 and, following a review and wide ranging consultation, a revised system was announced in 2002 to come into effect in April 2003. The revised system ranks projects on three components in a ratio of 20:12:12 respectively: benefit:cost ratio, the number of people to be protected (as measured by number of residences over cost) and environmental assets protected. In order to be approved for grant aid from Defra proposals must meet a minimum threshold score, which is reviewed annually.

For investment in other flood management expenditure the Agency issued guidance to Regional Flood Defence Committees (RFDCs) on priorities in 1998. From 1 April 2004 Grant in Aid from Defra will replace levies on local authorities for financing the bulk of RFDC expenditure and this gives the Agency a greater direct role in deciding on priorities and distribution between regions. For 2004–05, allocations reflected the assumptions made in regional business plans for the previous levy-setting round. The Agency is now working with Defra on a more robust prioritisation system for the allocation of Grant in Aid based on new performance measures in relation to flood risk reduction, for application from 2006–07. In the meantime the Agency will be expected to meet the targets published in their 2004 Corporate Plan.

Livestock

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effect of the slaughter-only market on *(a)* farms and *(b)* auction marts; and if she will alter her Department's ruling so that livestock may return to farm of origin with the proviso that it triggers a 20 day standstill on that farm. [162470]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is for market operators to take a commercial decision as to whether they choose to operate as a dedicated slaughter market. These markets can be beneficial to auction markets because of the revenue received from livestock originating from farms that are under a movement standstill.

Dedicated slaughter markets can also be beneficial to livestock farmers because they are able to take animals there whilst their farm is under a movement standstill.

The standstill arrangements are based on a scientific Cost Benefit Analysis of the disease risks associated with various standstill lengths. I do not propose to amend the standstill regime, which represents the best available balance between minimising disease risk and the needs of the farming community to trade livestock.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the welfare implications for suckler herds of the proposed pre-movement testing regime, with particular reference to the sufficiency of grazing to support animals retained on farm as a result of movement restrictions. [158602]

Mr. Bradshaw: None. Any welfare implications of this proposal will be estimated as part of the consultation process, which will involve discussions with veterinary and farming interests.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her best estimate is of the number of cattle movements made annually in the United Kingdom to which pre- and post-movement testing will apply. [158628]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Cattle Tracing System in 2002 recorded approximately 2.8 million cattle movements in GB to which pre and post movement testing could apply dependent upon the option and area selected.

Pig Industry

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will break down by *(a)* year and *(b)* scheme how the £66 million allocated to the pig industry restructuring scheme was spent; and if she will list unspent funds. [155593]

Alun Michael: The £66 million provisionally allocated to the Pig Industry Restructuring Scheme was spent as follows:

(a) £15.7 million in Financial Year 2001–02 and £10.9 million in each Financial Year 2002–03 and 2003–04.

(b) £21.8 million for the Ongoers scheme and £15.7 million for the Outgoers scheme.

Of the remainder, £22 million was used to fund measures related to the classical swine fever (CSF) outbreak in East Anglia, £3.9 million was 'loaned' to the Meat and Livestock Commission to fund the industry's top-up payment to the Government's CSF-related Pig Welfare (Disposal) Scheme, and £2.6 million was re-allocated to a post-FMD recovery scheme.

Not all claims have been submitted and met as yet but funds have been fully allocated.

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many *(a)* solely state-financed and *(b)* public-private partnership and private finance initiative projects for which her Department is responsible have been launched in each region in each of the last 10 years; [160963]

(2) how much was spent by *(a)* the Government on solely state-financed projects and *(b)* the (i) Government and (ii) private sector on public-private and private finance initiative projects for which her Department is responsible, in each of the last 10 years, broken down by region. [160964]

Alun Michael: Details on the Department's Private Finance Initiatives are in the Signed Project List on the Treasury Website http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public private partnerships/ppp pfi stats. cfm. The remainder of the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Severely Disadvantaged Areas

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what alternative land uses she has considered for land vacated in severely disadvantaged areas resulting from lower payment made to livestock producers in those areas. [161539]

Alun Michael: Recipients of the single farm payment will be required to respect the cross compliance conditions. These will include a requirement to maintain land in good agricultural and environmental condition. Subject to these requirements, it will be for individual farmers to decide how best to organise their businesses.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her assessment is of the impact on wildlife in severely disadvantaged areas of the payment regime in those areas. [161540]

Alun Michael: Defra will publish shortly an analysis of the economic impact on the English farming industry of the decoupling of CAP direct payment and the decision to allocate entitlement on the basis set out in the statement of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to the House on 12 February. Defra will monitor future changes in farming practices, markets and the environment.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with farmers' representatives on the single farm payment to livestock farmers in severely disadvantaged areas. [161541]

Alun Michael: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made her decision on the basis for allocating entitlements to the single farm payment in England in the best interests of the farming industry as well as the wider public interest. Ministers and officials have had frequent meetings with representatives of farming organisations, before and since the announcement on 12 February, including with organisations with members in the Severely Disadvantaged Areas.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what estimate she has made of the number of livestock farmers in severely disadvantaged areas who will cease farming over the next 10 years; [161542]

(2) what assessment she has made of the effects on livestock farmers in severely disadvantaged areas of competition with livestock farmers in receipt of different levels of payments under the single farm payment scheme; [161543]

(3) what her assessment is of the effect on farmers' incomes in severely disadvantaged areas of differentials in single farm payments between producers in these areas and other livestock producers in the rest of England. [161536]

Alun Michael: Defra will publish shortly an analysis of the economic impact on the English farming industry of the decoupling of CAP direct payment and the decision to allocate entitlement on the basis set out in the statement of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to the House on 12 February 2004.

Single Farm Payments

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) pursuant to her oral answer of 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1640, on single farm payments, what the nature of Mr. Dring's memorandum was; for what purpose it was written; for what purpose it was submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; and whether the memorandum was requested by senior officials in MAFF; [162111]

(2) pursuant to her oral answer of 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1640, on single farm payments, when the memorandum from Mr. Dring was *(a)* written and *(b)* received by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; what discussions were held between Mr. Dring and his senior managers in MAFF following receipt of the memorandum; and what assessment was made of the memorandum by legal officials in MAFF; [162112]

(3) pursuant to her oral answer of 11March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1640, on single farm payments, who in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food made the decision not to submit Mr. Dring's memorandum to Dr Iain Anderson's inquiry into the foot and mouth outbreak. [162113]

Mr. Bradshaw: Mr. Dring wrote a personal statement during the summer of 2001 on his own initiative to document events in the light of the prospect of a court case against Robert Waugh and because he believed the information might be of help to any inquiry after the outbreak. It was not a formal report. He sought advice from his senior manager on 29 October 2001 who discussed the handling of the statement with the Department's Inquiry Liaison Unit. The statement was passed to them on 13 December 2001. The Inquiry Liaison Unit was responsible for passing to the Inquiry teams information on behalf of the Department. Individual officers retained the right to submit personal submissions, but Mr. Dring did not make a submission to the Anderson Inquiry. His personal statement is now in the Library of the House.

Small Business Support

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the support programmes for small businesses that *(a)* her Department and *(b)* its agencies have financed, including Common Agricultural Policy payments in each of the last five years; how much money was allocated for each scheme in each year; how much money has gone unclaimed under each scheme; and how many small businesses have benefited from each scheme. [161255]

Alun Michael: Information is available in the form requested only at disproportionate cost, but I hope the following will be helpful.

The Cross-Cutting Review of Government Services for Small Business, published by the Small Business Service in December 2002, recorded that Defra and its agencies provided support to small businesses through over 120 schemes offering:

Grants (including EU production subsidies to agriculture)

Advice

In-kind support

The review estimated a total cost for these schemes of £3,120 million per year, the majority of which comprised production subsidies paid out under Pillar 1 of the Common Agricultural Policy. Some information about the range of schemes provided can be found in the Departmental Estimates for the year ending 31 March 2003, which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Although the 2002 review did not record how many businesses had benefited from the schemes operated, it recorded that Defra has significant contact with approximately 200,000 small and medium sized enterprises a year.

A review of rural funding schemes was announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 11 November 2003, and is now in progress.

PRIME MINISTER

Credit Card Debt

Q9. **John Mann:** To ask the Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the level of credit card debt. [163186]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have been asked to reply.

Last year, the Department for Trade and Industry published a White Paper on consumer credit that looked at credit card debt in the UK, suggested ways of tackling unmanageable levels of debt and offered advice to consumers looking for credit. The Government are working with the credit industry to ensure responsible lending and to increase access to free debt advice. I am also aware that the Bank of England publishes monthly statistics on credit card debt.

TRANSPORT

Car Usage

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has set targets for reducing car usage over the next 20 years. [162040]

Mr. Jamieson: The Government have not set targets for car usage. The Government's strategy is to reduce congestion and to reduce the environmental effects through investment in public transport, better traffic management and support for cleaner motoring.

Hazardous Substances (Carriage at Sea)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 15 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 40W, on ships (dangerous cargoes), how many incidents resulted in *(a)* court actions and *(b)* fines; and what the (i) nature of the conviction and (ii) financial penalty was in each case. [162971]

Mr. Jamieson: None of the incidents referred to in 2001 and 2002 resulted in court actions. In all of these cases it was either not possible to ascertain which vessels had lost the dangerous cargoes, or the spill occurred within harbour limits. In the latter case, it would be for the appropriate harbour authority to take forward court action.

Speed Cameras

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the accident records for each speed camera site in Essex. [156315]

Mr. Jamieson: Safety cameras in Essex are operated by the Essex Safety Camera Partnership. My Department will shortly publish collision and casualty information for all Safety Camera Partnerships in England and Wales.

TREASURY

Civil Service Jobs

Mr. Byers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach across Government Departments to *(a)* the reduction in civil service jobs (i) announced in the Budget Statement and (ii) that may follow from the Gershon Review and *(b)* the proposals to relocate employment of civil servants contained in the Lyons report; and if he will make a statement. [163266]

Mr. Boateng *[holding answer 23 March 2004]:* Sir Peter Gershon will be working with Departments to help them prepare efficiency submissions as part of their overall spending plans to the 2004 Spending Review. These proposals will take account of departments' relocation plans submitted to the Lyons Review. Departments will be expected to integrate their plans on efficiency and relocation.

Accounting Officers

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on *(a)* the circumstances in which an accounting officer should seek a direction from a Minister before authorising expenditure, *(b)* the number of occasions since 6 June 2001 that such directions have been sought by accounting officers and *(c)* the Department and sum involved and the purpose of the expenditure for which a direction was sought in each case. [162894]

Ruth Kelly: The circumstances in which an accounting officer should seek a direction from a Minister before authorising expenditure are set out in paragraphs 15–18 of the Treasury document, "The Responsibilities of an Accounting Officer", as updated in March 2004. This document is published as annex 4.1 of the Treasury guidance, "Government Accounting". It may be viewed online at www.government-accounting.gov.uk.

The number of occasions since 6 June 2001 when such directions have been sought by accounting officers is four. The Departments concerned, together with general subject matter of each direction, were detailed in the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable) on 30 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 311W; the answer given by the Economic Secretary on 23 June 2003, *Official Report*, column 617W; the answer given by the Chief Secretary on 10 June 2002, *Official Report*, column 1037W; and in the answer given by his predecessor on 8 May 2002, *Official Report*, column 253W, relating to the direction issued in the then Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions in 2002 and not, as stated in column 253W, in 2001.

The Treasury is advised when a ministerial direction is issued, but comprehensive information on the sums involved and the purpose of the expenditure related to the direction is not provided to the Treasury by Departments.

Age-Related Allowances

Mr. Todd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will *(a)* raise the figure below which pensioners may retain the full benefit of age-related allowances and *(b)* reduce the effect of the taper above that figure. [163342]

Ruth Kelly: The purpose of the age-related allowances is to give extra help to those aged 65 and over who have to rely on relatively modest incomes. They are therefore subject to an income limit, which is reviewed as part of the Budget process. The Government have no plans to alter the rate of the taper where income exceeds the limit.

Age-related personal allowances will increase in line with earnings rather than prices in April 2004 and will continue to do so for the remainder of this Parliament.

Financial Services

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessments his Department has made of the costs to the economy as a whole caused by poor consumer understanding of the *(a)* financial services and *(b)* consumer credit industries. [163360]

Ruth Kelly: Poor consumer understanding of financial services can arise through imperfect information and low levels of financial literacy.

The Financial Services Authority, as part of its statutory objective to promote public understanding of the financial system, has published research (Occasional Paper 19) looking at how much a typical consumer would lose depending on their lifestage, reflecting the financial products held. For a typical young family this would equate to £268 per annum. No aggregate figure for financial services is available.

The White Paper "Fair, Clear and Competitive: The Consumer Credit Market in the 21st Century" (Cm 6040) estimates that informational problems associated with unsecured lending in the credit market give rise to complaints of consumer detriment approaching £40 million per annum. The White Paper estimates that increasing the transparency of agreements could save consumers a total of £381 million per annum as consumers are better able to shop around for the best deals.

Raising standards of financial literacy is an important part of the Government's wider strategy to reduce social and financial exclusion, and promote appropriate participation in the financial services industry, while tackling over-indebtedness, and promote saving.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will commission research to assess consumers' understanding of the different regulatory systems for equity release and home reversion schemes once the new Financial Services Authority's regulation comes into force. [163380]

Ruth Kelly: Sales of mortgage-based equity release schemes, also known as lifetime mortgages, will be regulated by the Financial Services Authority as from 31 October 2004. The Government are considering responses to the consultation on whether home reversion equity release schemes should also be regulated by the FSA. An announcement will be made in due course. The Government therefore have no plans to commission

research to assess consumers' understanding of the different regulatory systems once the new FSA regulation comes into force.

Disposable Incomes

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of real personal disposable income was in Greater London in each year since 1980; and what the percentage change was in each year compared with the previous year. [163062]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Simon Hughes, dated 24 March 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question on real disposable personal income in Greater London since 1980. (163062)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) does not compile estimates of regional real disposable income. We do, however, publish estimates of regional gross disposable household income (GDHI) at current prices, as described under the European System of Accounts 1995 (ESA95). Estimates covering the period 1995 to 1999 were published on 26 March 2002 and data for the UK as a whole and for the London region are presented in the table below.

Total gross disposable household income[1] (GDHI) UK and London region, 1995–1999

	UK		London Region	
Year	GDHI	Annual Change	GDHI	Annual Change
1995	754,140		109,563	
1996	796,674	5.7	116,859	6.7
1997	843,244	5.9	126,154	8.0
1998	893,466	6.0	136,966	8.6
1999	930,887	4.2	143,088	4.5

[1] Consistent with the 2001 National Accounts Blue Book
[2] Excludes GDHI from the "extra regio" category which covers the contribution to GDHI from UK embassy staff and forces personnel stationed overseas
Previous estimates for regional GDHI covering the period 1989–1999 were published in July 2001. They data are not consistent with those shown above, owing to revisions to methods and to input data. However, these earlier estimates are available on the ONS website at:
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?ID=123&Pos=5&ColRank=1&Rank=160
Source:
Office for National Statistics

European Council of Finance Ministers

Mr. Hood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the outcome was of the ECOFIN Council held on 9 March; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [161441]

Mr. Gordon Brown: I was unable to attend ECOFIN on 9 March. The UK was represented by John Grant, (the UK permanent representative to the EU) and Jon Cunliffe, (Managing director of Macro Economic Policy and International Finance Directorate, HM Treasury).

At the breakfast discussion, the Presidency invited Ministers to comment on a draft programme of future work, prepared by the Economic Policy Committee (EPC), to take forward the four Presidency initiatives on regulatory reform. Ministers reached a common understanding on the need for a work programme along the lines of the EPC paper, and that this should be reflected in the Key issues paper and the Spring Council Conclusions.

ECOFIN adopted a Key Issues Paper for the Spring European Council.

The Commission gave an assessment of national contributions to the Growth Initiative to date and Council conclusions were adopted.

The Council examined the stability programmes for Belgium, Spain, Germany and Portugal and Council Opinions were agreed.

ECOFIN gave its approval for the Commission to conclude a monetary agreement with Andorra.

On the Savings Tax Directive, the UK updated the Council on progress with the UK dependent and associated territories. All eight have now made commitments to apply the same measures as member states. The Netherlands reported good progress on their model agreement for the Antilles and Aruba. The Commission updated on progress with Switzerland and the micro-states. The Council reiterated its full determination to come to a satisfactory and timely conclusion of the negotiations with negotiating partners.

On VAT Reduced Rates, the Presidency outlined its intention to consider the matter further at working group level in preparation for discussion at a later ECOFIN.

The Council agreed its Recommendation that the Commission should be granted discharge for its management of the 2002 budget. The UK joined the Netherlands and Denmark in expressing regret at the ninth successive negative Declaration of Assurance (DAS); in calling on the Commission to speed up its financial improvements; and in calling for ECOFIN auditors in member states and EU institutions to work more closely to improve external controls.

The Council agreed a set of conclusions on the budget guidelines for 2005, which are consistent with the principles of budget discipline and UK policy on the community budget.

EU Budget

Mr. Spring: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the EU budget will be in 2004–05; what *(a)* proportion and *(b)* sums will be spent on (i) the Common Agricultural Policy, (ii) the Common Fisheries Policy, (iii) structural operations and (iv) overseas aid; and what estimate he has made of expenditure in each category for the remainder of the current multi-annual financial framework. [161462]

Ruth Kelly: I refer the hon. Member to the following documents:

General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2004 (Document reference: Official Journal L 53 of 23 February 2004)

Preliminary Draft Amending Budget number 1 to the budget for 2004 (Document reference: SEC 2004 105)—page 9

Annual Policy Strategy for 2005—pages 18–19 (Document reference: COM 2004 1333)

Technical adjustment of the financial perspectives for 2005 in line with movements in GNI and prices—page 6 (Document reference: COM 2003 785)

All these documents are available from the public website of the European Commission http://europa.eu.int/comm. The Preliminary Draft Amending Budget number 1 to the budget for 2004, the Annual Policy Strategy for 2005, and the Technical adjustment of the financial perspectives for 2005 have been deposited in the House.

Kenneth Norden

Bob Spink: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will meet Mr.Kenneth Norden to discuss the loss of his final salary pension scheme. [163593]

Ruth Kelly: If the hon. Gentleman or his constituent would kindly write to me with full details of the issue that is of concern to him, I will look into it.

Ovarian Hyper Stimulation Syndrome

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many deaths from ovarian hyper stimulation syndrome have been reported since 1991. [163165]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Amess, dated 24 March 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many deaths from ovarian hyper stimulation syndrome have been reported since 1991. (163165)

The Office for National Statistics has recorded two deaths registered in England and Wales which include a mention of ovarian hyper-stimulation syndrome between 1991 and 2002, the latest year for which death registration figures are available.

Pre-Budget Report

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost was of the *(a)* preparation and *(b)* distribution of the "What the Pre-Budget Report Means For" series of documents specific to each English region. [162816]

Ruth Kelly: The total cost of the preparation and distribution of the regional 2003 Pre-Budget Report leaflets was £2,100. This covered the production of 1,500 leaflets for each of the nine Government Office English regions, as well as for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The total cost included distribution of the leaflets to the Government Offices and the Devolved Administrations.

Same-sex Couples

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many same-sex couple households there are in England and Wales according to the 2001 Census; and how many same-sex couple households there are in Great Britain according to the Labour Force Survey. [163070]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Edward Leigh, dated 24 March 2004:

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many same-sex couple households there are in England and Wales according to the 2001 Census; and how many same-sex couple households there are in Great Britain according to the Labour Force Survey. (163070)

The 2001 Census defines a same-sex couple as two people of the same sex, both resident in the same household, who report themselves as partners on the Census form. Figures published in table UV93 in the 2001 Census National Report for England and Wales Part 2 on the number of people with same-sex partners indicate that there were 39,261 co-residential same-sex couples in England and Wales identified by the 2001 Census. However, same-sex couples can only be identified if they choose to declare themselves as partners on the Census form. Thus the count of co-residential same-sex couples would be an underestimate of the true number. It is not known to what extent there was an undercount because, for example, same-sex couples may have ticked some other box in the relationship field such as 'Unrelated'. Furthermore, a household may contain more than one couple and there is no exact count of the number of same-sex households from the 2001 Census.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) gives information about same-sex couple households for each three-month period. It collects information on residents in private households. Questions are designed to establish whether each resident is cohabiting or not, and, if so, with which other household member. However, same-sex partnership can only be distinguished if the respondent volunteers the fact; it is not asked. In the LFS, a same-sex couple is defined as two respondents who are living together as a couple in the household and who are the same sex.

In the three-month period ending November 2003, 50,887 same-sex couple households in Great Britain were identified on this basis. The LFS is a sample survey covering over 57,000 households in the United Kingdom in each three-month period. As with any statistical sample survey, estimates from the Labour Force Survey are subject to sampling error.

It is not possible to derive an estimate of the number of co-residential same-sex couples in Scotland by taking the difference of the two estimates provided in this answer, since data were provided at different times and in different contexts, and each figure is subject to estimation error.

There will be a more comprehensive analysis of how to interpret information on same sex couples later this year.

Science Strategy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he has taken to enhance science in his Department since the publication of the Government's science strategy, Investing in Innovation. [162246]

Ruth Kelly: HM Treasury works with the Office of Science and Technology, the DTI and the DfES on the implementation of the Government's science strategy, Investing in Innovation. HM Treasury's own direct expenditure on science and research is relatively small and is limited to economic advice, analysis and statistics: for example, during 2002–03, around £250,000 was spent on some 15 projects funded from the Macroeconomic Research Budget.

A 10-year investment framework for science and innovation, on which a consultation document was published recently[1], will be published alongside the 2004 spending review. This is also a joint project between HM Treasury, the Office of Science and Technology, the DTI and the DfES, and will look at a number of areas of Government policy in relation to science and innovation, including ensuring that Government Departments

remain well placed to exploit the opportunities that science and research have to offer. In particular, it will build on the 2002 Cross-Cutting Review of Science and Research, which fed into Investing in Innovation and set out recommendations to improve the management of Government Departments' research strategies and budgets.

[1] Science and innovation: working towards a ten-year investment framework, HMT, DfES & DTI, 16 March 2004.

Stamp Duty

Mr. Flight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what forecast he has made of the tax take for stamp duty on residential property for each band at which it is charged for 2004–05; and how much was raised in this way in each tax year since 1997–98. [163597]

Ruth Kelly: Estimates of receipts from stamp duty on residential property at each of the tax bands, from 1997–98 to 2002–03, are given at http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/stamp duty703IR153.pdf. Estimates of receipts at each tax band for 2003–04, and projections for 2004–05, are not available.

Strip Stamps

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many representations he has received in support of his proposal to introduce strip stamps. [161484]

John Healey: Since the Chancellor's announcement in the Pre-Budget Report that the Government were considering introducing tax stamps for spirits, Treasury Ministers and Officials have received a wide range of representations on this and on the spirits industry's alternative package of measures. Those representations acknowledge that spirits fraud is a serious problem and needs to be addressed but differ in their views on how to tackle this effectively. The main concerns highlighted related to the impact and compliance costs of tax stamps. In making his decision that tax stamps are necessary to tackle spirits fraud, the Chancellor took account of concerns raised and announced on Budget Day that he will help the trade financially with the cash-flow costs and capital investment associated with the introduction of tax stamps. He also announced that there would be a further freeze on spirits duty—for the seventh Budget in a row and, indeed, that spirits duty will be frozen for the remainder of this Parliament.

Officials are working with the industry to consider how the offsetting measures can be effectively targeted and applied and to develop the detailed arrangements for tax stamps in a way that minimises additional burdens on business and causes minimal disruption to the trade's operations.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of options for the elimination of spirits duty evasion other than the introduction of strip stamps. [161485]

John Healey: This Government have given exhaustive consideration over recent years, in close consultation with the alcohol industry, to finding ways to tackle the serious problem of spirits duty fraud.

HM Customs and Excise held a formal consultation on tax stamps in late 2001 and early 2002. They conducted a further formal consultation in the summer of 2003 on regulatory options for reducing opportunities for fraud in the alcohol holding and movement system.

Partly as a result of those earlier discussions, a number of measures have already been put in place or are planned to tackle spirits fraud. These include the creation of a Joint Spirits Fraud Task Force in 2002 and the development of draft Memoranda of Understanding between Customs and key spirits trade associations. Customs have also strengthened their operational response to fraud, including the creation of a National Discreditation Team to detect illicit loads which were destined to be diverted after arrival in the UK.

Despite these ongoing efforts, Customs' estimates, published alongside the Pre-Budget Report in December 2003, showed that around £600 million of revenue was lost through spirits fraud in 2001–2002. The Government therefore announced that tax stamps for spirits would be introduced from 2006 unless the industry put forward alternative measures that would be as effective as tax stamps in combating fraud.

There has been a further intensive period of discussions with the industry since December on all aspects of tax stamps and alternative options. The industry put forward an alternative package of 17 proposals. However, as announced in the Budget, the Government's assessment is that the anti-fraud impact of the alternative package falls significantly short of that estimated for tax stamps. The package contains inherent weaknesses: it leaves the door open for displacement to other types of fraud, most notably inward diversion; it stands to be undermined by a complicit party; and unlike tax stamps it does not tackle the problem of identification—the ability for consumers, retailers and Customs officers to distinguish readily between licit and illicit products.

A full assessment of the industry's package of alternative proposals to tax stamps will form part of a Regulatory Impact Assessment, to be published alongside this year's Finance Bill.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what research he has conducted on fraudulent production of strip stamps in other countries; and what security measures he proposes to guard against the fraudulent production of strip stamps in the UK. [161486]

John Healey: Officials from HM Customs and Excise have contacted forty countries which operate tax stamps to discuss their regimes and experience of fraudulent strip stamps. From the twenty-five detailed responses received it is clear that fraudulent production can be limited by the use of anti-counterfeiting measures.

In addition, Customs have conducted a series of discussions with security printers and other experts in anti-counterfeiting technology. This has revealed a wide range of overt, covert and forensic features which could be used to protect UK tax stamps from counterfeiting.

Customs will continue detailed discussion's with the industry and continue to draw on a wide range of expert opinion's in their work on implementation of tax stamps for spirits in the UK.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* UK distilled and *(b)* imported products will be affected by the introduction of strip stamps. [161637]

John Healey: Subject to certain exceptions, to be determined following further discussions with the industry, tax stamps will apply to retail containers of spirits, and to wine and made wine with a strength exceeding 22 per cent. alcohol by volume.

The requirement for UK retail containers of spirits to bear a tax stamp will, however, apply equally both to imported and to home produced goods.

Tax Receipts

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total tax take has been in each of the last five financial years for which figures are available. [162455]

Dawn Primarolo: Historic data on net taxes and social security contributions are available in table C4 of the public finances databank on the HM Treasury website www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/economic_data_and_tools/pubfinance/data_pubfinance_databank.cfm

Unclaimed Deposits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many unclaimed deposits in banks and building societies have remained so for more than *(a)* 50 years and *(b)* 100 years; and what estimate he has made of the total value of such deposits. [162222]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 24 March 2004]:* There is currently no official estimate of the number of unclaimed deposits in banks and building societies or their total value.

CABINET OFFICE

Better Regulation Task Force

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what recent cost-benefit analysis he has made of the Better Regulation Task Force; and if he will make a statement. [161958]

Mr. Alexander: The chairman and members of the Better Regulation Task Force are unpaid. The total running costs of the Task Force amount to about £0.5 million a year.

Since 1997 the Task Force has published 30 substantive reports and made around 400 recommendations to Government. All but 10 have been accepted.

Major reforms currently under way or recently enacted, that follow earlier recommendations by the Task Force include the reform of planning law, liquor licensing and fire safety.

The Task Force monitors the Government's implementation of its recommendations.

Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many cases of computer misuse there were in his Department in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003, broken down by category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [163275]

Mr. Alexander: The information requested is not available for 1997. There were two cases of computer misuse in the Cabinet Office in 2003. Both cases involved inappropriate use of the internet and resulted in disciplinary action.

e-Government

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what powers the Head of e-Government will have to co-ordinate departmental database plans. [163156]

Mr. Alexander: A key responsibility of the Head of e-Government will be to develop a Government wide IS/ICT strategy, standards and technical architecture. Within that remit we would expect to define a data architecture to support all government operations.

In addition, the Office of the e-Envoy is currently working closely with the Office for National Statistics, who are leading the development of the Citizen Information Project.

Permanent Secretary of Government Communications

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what expenditure is planned to be incurred in the establishment of the Permanent Secretary of Government Communications; and if he will make a statement. [161951]

Mr. Alexander: The Permanent Secretary Government Communications will work to ensure a co-ordinated approach and interaction between government and citizens with regard to the development and delivery of the Government's communications strategy.

The budget for this remit has been set at £3.4 million for 2004–05.

This includes efficiency savings of £1 million by the centralising of communications functions from across Cabinet Office units; for existing GIGS central functions funding, and for expenditure linked to the establishment of the Permanent Secretary role.

Public Appointments

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many nominations for public office were made in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004; and how many of these were made online. [162808]

Mr. Alexander: This information is not held centrally. Individual departments are responsible for making appointments to their own public bodies.

In order to provide greater access to information about opportunities to serve on the boards of public bodies, my Department launched a new public appointments vacancy website www.publicappts-vacs.gov.uk in March 2003. People can search the site by area of interest, Government Department and by location to find details of the vacancies of most interest to them, including how and where to apply.

WALES

University Students

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what percentage of students domiciled in Wales went on to university in each year since 1997. [160924]

Mr. Touhig: The only figures available for Welsh domiciled students entering university are for students leaving Welsh school sixth forms following Year 13 who entered a University or College of Higher Education. Figures are not collected for students entering University from other routes, such as further education, or mature students.

	Percentage
1997	63
1998	65
1999	65
2000	64
2001	67
2002	67

Source:
Careers Wales survey of pupil destinations from schools in Wales at 31 October of each year.

NHS Funding

11. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had since 25 February with the National Assembly for Wales Government on NHS funding in Wales. [162552]

Mr. Touhig: I regularly meet the Assembly Health Minister concerning the health service in Wales: funding for NHS Wales is one of the topics that we frequently discuss.

The increased funding for health as a result of the Spending Review 2002 mean that in 2004–05 the Assembly Government have been able to allocate almost 95 per cent. more to the health budget than in 1996–97.

Welsh Development Agency

12. **Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with the First Secretary about the work of the Welsh Development Agency. [162553]

Mr. Hain: I have regular meetings with the First Minister to discuss a range of issues of mutual interest to us, including the work of the WDA.

Wind Farms

13. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had on the *(a)* environmental and *(b)* health impact of wind farms in Wales. [162554]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with a range of organisations on a wide variety of issues including on matters concerning the development of renewable energy projects.

Airbus

14. **Mark Tami:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has held with *(a)* ministerial colleagues and *(b)* the National Assembly for Wales Government (i) to promote and (ii) to enhance the Airbus project at Broughton. [162555]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues, the First Minister and other stakeholders about a range of issues including the aerospace industry in Wales.

The launch investment aid of £530 million provided demonstrates the Government's practical and political support for Airbus to build the wings for the super jumbo project at Broughton and is a significant part of what is being done for the aerospace industry in Wales.

Pensioners

15. **Huw Irranca-Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the National Assembly for Wales Government and Cabinet colleagues on targeted help for the poorest pensioners in Wales. [162556]

Mr. Touhig: Regular ones. We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of Wales.

National Lottery

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was raised from the National Lottery in Wales in each year since 1997. [160872]

Estelle Morris: I have been asked to reply.

The available information is set out in a table prepared by Camelot that was placed in the Libraries of both Houses in response to a written parliamentary question from the hon. Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Jones) on 18 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 764W. The table lists sales of National Lottery tickets by postcode area since the Lottery's launch up to November 2003.

Rail Passenger Council

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met representatives from the Rail Passenger Council in Wales. [161647]

Mr. Hain: The Rail Passenger Council is the national body that co-ordinates the work of the regional committees. In Wales, the representative body is the Rail Passenger Committee.

Andrew Davies AM, the Assembly Minister for Economic Development and Transport, last met with the Committee's Chair and Secretary on 29 July 2003. I hold regular discussions with the Minister on all transport issues affecting Wales.

Supermarket Code of Practice

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the First Minister of the National Assembly on the effectiveness of the Supermarket Code of Practice; and if he will make a statement. [162510]

Mr. Touhig: Responsibility for monitoring the Supermarket Code of Practice rests with the Office of Fair Trading. It published its first annual review of the operation of the Code on 20 February 2004. The review found a widespread belief among suppliers that the Code was not working effectively. However, suppliers did not provide any hard evidence to support their view. The Office of Fair Trading is therefore carrying out a further compliance audit to establish how supermarkets deal with suppliers under the Code.

DEFENCE

Bowman Radio System

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Bowman radio system will be fully operational; and if he will make a statement. [162838]

Mr. Ingram: The Bowman tactical communication system will achieve its full operational capability incrementally. Following the programme's planned delivery into service in 2004, the aim is for the first brigade converted to Bowman to undertake a further 15 months of unit and collective performance training to achieve warfighting operational readiness. Based on current progress, this will be in 2005.

Brimstone Missile

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence with what *(a)* short range air-to-air, *(b)* beyond-visual-range air-to-air, *(c)* precision anti-armour and *(d)* other stand-off weapons the Future Joint Combat Aircraft (JCA) will be equipped; and for what reasons the requirement for (A) advanced short range air-to-air missiles and (B) Brimstone systems was removed from the JCA programme. [162643]

Mr. Ingram: No final decisions have been taken on the weapons fit for the Joint Combat Aircraft, beyond the requirement that it will have a precision bombing capability and an air to air capability when it enters service.

Weapons systems that we are considering integrating on JCA as the requirement evolves include:

Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile

Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile

Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (Meteor)

Paveway IV

Storm Shadow

Brimstone

Our considerations will cover which weapons should be carried internally and which should be carried externally on JCA. Under current plans, it is not considered cost or operationally effective for JCA to carry ASRAAM and Brimstone externally, but the internal carriage of these weapons remains an option.

Deepcut Barracks

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of Brigadier Evans 1995 review of Phase 2 training system at Deepcut barracks. [162271]

Mr. Ingram: Yes. Arrangements are being made to place a copy of the report in the Library of the House.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the recommendations were of the 3 December 2002 Final Report of the Deputy Adjutant General on the Deepcut investigation; and if he will place a copy in the Library. [162275]

Mr. Ingram: The Deputy Adjutant General made the following recommendations in his Final Report:

the establishment at Deepcut should be revised in order to provide a supervisory ratio of approximately 1:38, and the resultant requirement for an increment of up to 12 officers and 50 NCOs be funded in the Short Term Plan 2003 (£2.2 million);

the supervisory ratios across the entire Army Training and Recruiting Agency (ATRA) should be reviewed and brought to appropriate levels in line with a clearly defined and endorsed policy for all training establishments and which can be carried forward into the Defence Training Review;

performance Indicators and Targets placed upon the ATRA should be reviewed and reordered to prevent inconsistency with the best interests of the trainees and the reduction of Soldiers Awaiting Trade Training;

the routine security and guarding of the Deepcut site should be taken over by MPGS as soon as practicable at a cost of £1.7 million;

a common induction training package for ATRA Phase 2 instructors and supervisors should be implemented in order to raise standards towards those prevailing in Phase 1;

the detailed observations and taskings in the Joint Surrey Police/Army Learning Account should be implemented forthwith.

Arrangements are being made to place a copy of the report in the Library of the House.

Defence Employment (Essex)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Ministry of Defence civilian personnel and *(b)* servicemen and women were employed in bases and establishments in Essex (i) in 1992, (ii) in 1997 and (iii) on the latest available date. [162873]

Mr. Caplin: Reliable data on civilian personnel are only available at Government Office region. The number of Ministry of Defence civilian personnel located in the eastern region in 1993, 1997 and January 2004 were as follows.

	Number
1 April 1993	5,430
1 April 1997	5,910
1 January 2004	5,860

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. Reliable data are not available for 1992.

The number of Service personnel located in Essex in 1992,1997 and 2002 were as follows:

	Number
1 July 1992	3,800
1 July 1997	3,190
1 July 2002[1]	3,710

[1] Location data as at 1 July 2002 are the latest available.

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Figures are for UK Regular Forces (including both Trained and Untrained personnel), and therefore exclude Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service personnel, the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment, mobilised reservists and Naval Activated Reservists.

End-to-End Review

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department will determine its response to the End-to-End Review; and if he will make a statement. [162990]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 23 March 2004]*: The aim of the End-to-End Review was to find ways to improve logistics support to the armed forces, and to do this more efficiently. The End-to-End Study reported on 1 July 2003 and an 18 month Demonstration Phase commenced on 8 September 2003. A summary of the findings from the Review has been placed in the House Library.

The Demonstration Phase is using pilots to test End-to-End principles and to reduce risk. In parallel, the efficacy of some of the recommendations are being assessed and subjected to thorough investment appraisals prior to full implementation. I will make a more substantive statement on the implementation of the End-to-End Review when appropriate.

Eurofighter

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the US Administration on whether Eurofighter could bring potential benefits to the United States Air Force. [162148]

Mr. Ingram: None.

Future Rapid Effects System

Peter Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make an announcement on the future of the Future Rapid Effects System before the Easter recess. [162772]

Mr. Ingram: I hope to be in a position to make an announcement on the way ahead shortly, but this will not be before the Easter recess.

Service Suicides (Reports)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what conclusions were reached by Lieutenant Colonel Hawley in his October 1998 report that scoped the scale and nature of psychological morbidity among Army recruits; what recommendations were made; how many of these were acted upon; and if he will place a copy of the report in the Library. [162273]

Mr. Ingram: Lieutenant Colonel Hawley's paper on A Study of Attempted Suicide in the Army: 10 Years of Experience 1987 to 1996 came to the following conclusions:

a prospective cohort study should be undertaken over a period of five years to confirm the findings of this scoping study and to extend the analysis;

a review of the current selection criteria for entry into the Army should be undertaken in order to help select individuals appropriately;

a formalisation of the criteria for dealing and disposing of individuals who have attempted suicide should be completed;

training in the identification of individuals at risk should be introduced to all leadership courses.

This paper was not commissioned by the Army but produced as a result of private academic research in 1998. The report was not seen by the Chain of Command at the time and no action was taken. It coincided with a more major body of official research, the Walton Report. Arrangements are being made to place a copy of Lieutenant Colonel Hawley's paper in the Library of the House.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what conclusions were reached by the 1996 Walton report on circumstances relating to unnatural deaths in the Army; what recommendations were made; how many of these were acted upon; and if he will place a copy of the report in the Library. [162272]

Mr. Ingram: Dr. Suzy Walton's research into Suicide in the British Army resulted in a report that was published in five parts during the period December 1996 to September 1998. All recommendations have been acted upon. Arrangements are being made to place a copy of the report in the Library of the House.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether information technology *(a)* hardware and *(b)* software products are being used properly in his Department. [150936]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence has several hundred computer systems in use ranging from corporate IT systems serving thousands of users to business area systems serving smaller communities. This means that a detailed and specific answer to this question could be provided only at disproportionate cost. There are, however, some practices which are standard across the department and these are detailed as follows.

Information systems within the Department are controlled by Security and Operating Procedures (SyOps). Each System is only accredited for use once the procedures have been approved by the Departmental Security Officer. All users are required to observe the SyOps; enforcement is the responsibility of individual System Security Officer(SSO's)/Information Technology Security Officers (ITSO's).

Joint Service Publication (JSP) 440, covering these issues was revised last year. SyOps are revised as necessary as and when new threats to security arise. A recent example is the appearance of photo-messaging which has required that mobile phones be prohibited in some areas where formally they were permitted.

Iraq

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the names of *(a)* full-time and *(b)* reservist personnel who refused to serve in Iraq, and the action taken against them; and if he will make a statement. [162401]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 23 March 2004]:* No regular or reserve personnel have refused to serve in Iraq. However, one regular member of the armed forces registered a conscientious objection on the grounds of religion, which was accepted and he was subsequently discharged.

Typhoon

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what suppression of enemy air defences capabilities the Typhoon will have. [162646]

Mr. Ingram: The baseline design for Typhoon includes the ability to integrate a SEAD capability such as ALARM. The United Kingdom is currently negotiating with industry and partner negotiations on what weapons fit will be incorporated into Typhoon as part of Tranche 2.

Warships

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when HMS Bulwark will enter service. [162950]

Mr. Ingram: HMS Bulwark is planned to enter service with the Royal Navy by the end of March 2005.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Sure Start Maternity Grant

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many workers in Buckingham have taken up the Sure Start maternity grant. [161564]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the format requested; the available information is in the table.

Awards of Sure Start Maternity Grants in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire district, broken down by qualifying benefit/tax credit

	Income support	*Jobseekers allowance (Income based)*	*Tax credits*	*Total*
2000–01	1,317	199	505	2,021
2001–02	1,414	189	783	2,386
2002–03	1,499	225	1,151	2,875
2003–04	1,379	242	1,166	2,787

Notes:
1. Data are not available by parliamentary constituency. Buckingham parliamentary constituency is part of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Jobcentre Plus District, which was formed by merging Buckinghamshire Social Fund District and Oxfordshire Social Fund District in December 2002. For comparison purposes, data before the merger is given for Buckinghamshire Social Fund District and Oxfordshire Social Fund District combined.
2. Data on applications by workers are not available.
3. The available data are given in the tables above. Prior to 2003–04, tax credits refer to Working Families' Tax Credit and Disabled Person's Tax Credit. From 2003–04, tax credits refer to Child Tax Credit (CTC) payable at a rate higher than the family element and Working Tax Credit where the disability or severe disability element is included in the award. Where a Sure Start Maternity Grant (SSMG) is awarded and the applicant or partner is in receipt of both Income Support (IS) and CTC at the appropriate rate, the SSMG award will be recorded under IS. Similarly, where a SSMG is awarded and the applicant or partner is in receipt of both Jobseeker's Allowance (Income-Based) (JSA(IB)) and CTC at the appropriate rate, the SSMG award should be recorded under JSA(IB).
4. Data for 2003–04 are for April 2003 to February 2004 only.
Source:
DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System.

Departmental Scientific Adviser

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether his Department has a chief scientific adviser. [162478]

Malcolm Wicks: Professor Mansel Aylward, CB is the Chief Scientific Adviser to the Department for Work and Pensions. Dr. Paul Davies is the Chief Scientific Adviser to the Health and Safety Executive.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Department has decided to discontinue the Activities for Managing Life system for assessing claims for disability living allowance; and if he will make a statement. [163265]

Maria Eagle: Initial tests of the Activities for Managing Life (AMLs) assessment model as a potential alternative method of assessing entitlement to Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance were not sufficiently encouraging to justify further development and testing of the model. We believe that our delivery objectives of substantially improved customer service and more speedy, accurate and consistent decision making can best be achieved through the Disability and Carers Service's change programme, which is designed to modernise the delivery of the benefits on the basis of the current assessment arrangements.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women receiving incapacity benefit payments made on mental health grounds in relation to (i) stress and (ii) depression received these payments for longer than (A) one month, (B) six months, (C) a year and (D) two years in each year since 1997; and if he will break down these payments by region. [163052]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* The information has been placed in the Library.

Mental Health

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people with mental ill health have been classified as hospital in-patients for more than a year for the purposes of benefit, broken down by *(a)* age, *(b)* diagnosis and *(c)* category of mental ill health. [163264]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the types of establishment accommodating people with mental ill health who are classified as hospital in-patients for more than a year for the purposes of benefit. [163263]

Malcolm Wicks: For benefit purposes, a person is regarded as receiving or having received free in-patient treatment for any period when they are maintained free

of charge while undergoing medical or other treatment in a hospital or similar institution, under the National Health Service Act 1997, the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 or the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 or in a hospital or similar institution maintained or administered by the Defence Council.

Pensions

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department is taking to address the imbalances in levels of pensions between men and women, with particular reference to women from ethnic minorities. [162862]

Malcolm Wicks: Measures instituted by this Government since 1997 to improve pensioners' incomes have been targeted largely on those in the lower part of the income distribution who tend to be older, female, and from ethnic minorities.

The main measures since 1997 include: above inflation increases in the Basic State Pension between April 2000 and April 2003; the introduction of the Minimum Income Guarantee and then Pension Credit which, from April 2004, will ensure that no single pensioner need live on less than £105.45 a week and no couple on less than £160.95 a week, as well as providing extra support for those with modest savings; Winter Fuel payments of £200 a year for the remainder of this Parliament; an extra £100 a year within the Winter Fuel Payments for those aged 80 or over; free TV licences for individuals aged 75 or over; and an extra 100 for households with at least one pensioner aged 70 or over.

The Government will be spending around £10 billion a year extra on pensioners in 2004–05 as a result of these measures. They have resulted in pensioner households gaining £1,350 a year in real terms with the poorest third of pensioners gaining £1,750 a year in real terms.

In addition, the DWP provides comprehensive guidance to staff on providing a service to ethnic minority communities. The Department also provides information in a range of languages and holds an annual Ethnic Minority forum at which issues affecting black and minority ethnic pensioners are discussed.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans his Department has to require compulsory employer contributions to workers' pensions. [162863]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government currently have no plans to require compulsory employer contributions. We believe in the value of employer contributions but also in the pensions partnership that is at the heart of the voluntarist system.

It is, however, important that progress is independently monitored. That is why we have established the Pensions Commission to monitor how the voluntarist system is developing. On the basis of the Commission's recommendations, we will decide whether there is a case for moving beyond the current voluntary approach.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he plans to reach a conclusion prior to the report stage of the Pensions Bill as to his policy on the position of those pension fund holders who have already lost out and are precluded from cover by the proposed protection fund as a result of the proposed date of entry of the same. [162946]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government are sympathetic to all those people who will not receive the pension they worked so hard to build up for their future retirement. We have been meeting some of those affected and listened to suggestions regarding assistance ahead of the Pension Protection Fund's introduction. But there are complex arguments on both sides.

We are now exploring with industry representatives the basis on which we can establish firm estimates of the extent of the problem of defined benefit schemes winding-up under funded, the numbers affected and the potential scale of losses. Once those data have been collated, I will be in a better position to report more fully the findings of our examinations and what, if any, the appropriate course of action should be.

Retirement Age

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his policy is on the statutory retirement age in the UK. [162861]

Malcolm Wicks: There is no statutory retirement age in the UK, in the sense of an age at which legislation requires a person to retire.

The state pension age is currently 65 for men and 60 for women but will increase gradually from 60 to 65 between 2010 and 2020 to allow employees and employers as well as companies running pension schemes time to plan for and implement the changes.

We have signalled our intention to maintain the state pension age at 65 (there is a consensus that people should have the right to work longer but that this should be voluntary and not forced). However, both Private and State Pension systems allow individuals to work past this age and accrue higher pensions.

Proposals in the Pensions Bill will allow individuals to receive better rewards for deferring their state pension in the form of a lump sum payment or increased pension when an individual eventually retires.

The minimum age at which tax privileged retirement benefits can be drawn from a private pension scheme will be raised to 55 years by 2010. It is possible to retire earlier in exchange for an actuarial reduction of private pension. The actual amounts are dependant on the type of pension scheme and when the employee retires. It is a requirement of tax legislation that schemes should have a normal pension age reflecting the age at which individuals would usually withdraw their pension.

We are proposing to raise the age at which public sector employees can draw an unreduced pension from 60 to 65. This age would apply regardless of the employee's length of service but certain occupations where the physical capacity of the job justify the award of a normal pension at a lower age will continue.

Science Strategy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he has taken to enhance science in his Department since the publication of the Government's science strategy, Investing in Innovation. [162247]

Malcolm Wicks: Evidence from research plays a key role in developing, monitoring and evaluating the business of the Department. The Department has developed a cycle of investigation and research, leading to informed planning to implement change (sometimes through pilots which refine innovative approaches), and then monitoring to assess the impact. This cycle is reflected in a parallel process of consulting upon and commissioning our social research programme through open tendering. The analytical community has been reorganised and aligned with policy and delivery units, integrating analysis and policymaking to provide the highest level of evidence-based policy making. The Department has maintained the level of research spending, and rigorous evaluation and monitoring of new developments. All research is published on the internet so that it is freely available to anyone who would wish to use it.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Asbestos

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of buildings occupied by *(a)* staff of the Department and *(b)* staff of the Department's executive agencies have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to implementation of the control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159368]

Ms Hewitt: The Department of Trade and Industry has ensured all buildings occupied by its staff that could contain asbestos have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to the implementation of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. For those Executive Agencies where the Department holds information, the position is similar.

Letter from Caren Fullerton to Malcolm Bruce, dated 24 March 2004:

Within the past 9 months surveys have been undertaken in each of the 5 buildings occupied by Patent Office staff, for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to implementation of the control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002.

The surveys were arranged and managed by The Patent Office in respect of the 3 buildings solely occupied by Patent Office staff, and by the Office for National Statistics and the Charity Commission in respect of buildings where the Patent Office is a minor occupier.

Letter from Claire Clancy to Malcolm Bruce, dated 24 March 2004:

I am responding to your recent Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on behalf of Companies House, which is an Executive Agency of the DTI.

A survey of our Cardiff offices was carried out in August 2002 by a specialist consultant in accordance with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. They compiled a detailed asbestos register which has been updated as work is carried out. The building accommodates 1,264 Companies House staff and approximately 300 tenants from the DTI and DWP.

Our offices in Edinburgh and London accommodating 47 staff, are rented from the DWP and the Insolvency Service respectively, and are therefore outwith our control.

Letter from David Smith to Malcolm Bruce, dated 24 March 2004:

You have asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for information about asbestos surveys in relation to the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 in her Department and its Agencies. This request has just been passed to me in respect of the Radiocommunications Agency.

The Radiocommunications Agency (RA) was a DTI Agency until 28 December 2003 when its responsibilities, functions and assets (including land and buildings) were transferred to the Office of Communications (Ofcom).

As the Agency's Accounting Officer, I continue to have responsibility for ensuring that the transfer of staff and DTI assets have been properly carried out and reflected in the RA accounts as part of the implementation of the Communications Act 2003. But from 29 December the relevant Accounting Officer for the information you are seeking is Ofcom's Chief Executive, Stephen Carter. Ofcom is a statutory corporation and therefore falls outside the arrangements by which Agencies respond to Parliamentary Questions.

For future reference, Mr Carter's address is:

Office of Communications
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA.

Letter from Graham Horne to Malcolm Bruce, dated 24 March 2004:

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has asked me to reply to you directly on behalf of The Insolvency Service in respect to your question (2003/1822) dated 3 March 2004 asking which buildings occupied by staff of the Department's executive agencies have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to implementation of the control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002.

The Insolvency Service has surveyed all of its buildings for asbestos, apart from one, which will be surveyed in April 2004.

Letter from J. W. Llewellyn to Malcolm Bruce, dated 24 March 2004:

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has asked me to reply on behalf of the National Weights and Measures Laboratory (NWML) to your question about surveys for identifying the presence of asbestos in buildings occupied by NWML staff.

The National Weights and Measures Laboratory moved into a purpose built laboratory at Teddington in 1988. The building has been surveyed recently and the preliminary report confirms that no asbestos is present.

Bullying

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on her policy towards bullying in the workplace by senior management personnel, with particular reference to local government officers. [163233]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government take the issue of bullying at work very seriously. We believe bullying is unacceptable whether by senior managers or between colleagues in any sector of industry.

This spring the Government intend to consult on a code of conduct for local administration employees. The aim of such a code would be to establish broad ethical

principles for all authority employees. Such a code would complement the existing model code for councillors, and could be incorporated into the conditions of service of the employees of all relevant local authorities. Among the provisions which the code could contain would be a requirement that the employee must treat others with respect.

Civil Partnerships

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether there is a requirement on the United Kingdom to create a legal status for same-sex couples. [163087]

Jacqui Smith: The Government are proposing the creation of a new legal relationship of civil partnership for reasons of general equality and social justice. There is no legal requirement on the United Kingdom to create a legal status for same-sex couples.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether legal rights and benefits to which married couples are entitled will not be given to registered same-sex couples in the Civil Partnership Bill. [163088]

Jacqui Smith: The Government consulted on the extent and nature of rights and responsibilities to which civil partners should be entitled last year. The Government will make clear their proposals on introduction of the forthcoming Civil Partnership Bill.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how long a same-sex couple will be required to live together before they can register their partnership under the proposed Civil Partnership Bill. [163089]

Jacqui Smith: The Government's policy is that same-sex couples would not be required to live together before entering a civil partnership.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reason unfaithfulness similar to adultery has been omitted as a ground for dissolution of civil partnerships; and what obligation there is upon those entering a civil partnership to stay together for life. [163090]

Jacqui Smith: The detailed proposals for a dissolution procedure will appear in the forthcoming Civil Partnership Bill. Government policy is that the conduct of a civil partner who is unfaithful could amount to unreasonable behaviour on which dissolution proceedings could be grounded. This would be a matter for individual dissolution proceedings.

The Government's proposals for civil partnership are designed for those people in, or wishing to enter into, same-sex couple relationships that are intended to be permanent. The significant rights and responsibilities flowing from the new legal relationship of civil partnership and the formality of the proposed dissolution procedure underline the seriousness of the commitment expected.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what legal protection will be afforded to registrars who hold a principled and conscientious objection to conducting a civil partnership registration under the proposed Civil Partnership Bill. [163091]

Jacqui Smith: The Government's policy is that there would be a legal requirement on registration authorities to provide the means to register a civil partnership. This would have to be provided to the same high standards as for other statutory services.

Coal Industry

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what commitments regarding working facilities were given by the National Union of Mineworkers to *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* the Coal Authority before the announcement of investment aid on 3 March 2003. [160108]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* Dr. Ian Roxburgh, the Chief Executive of the Coal Authority, met representatives of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in January 2003 during work which he undertook at the request of the then Minister for Energy, my hon. Friend, the Member for Cunningham North (Mr. Wilson), to develop proposals to secure greater certainty for the future of the industry. That discussion permitted Dr. Roxburgh to advise ministers that the NUM was fully committed to proposals which would enable the introduction of a coal investment aid package, accepted that they would entail changes to working practices, and had agreed that they would examine flexible working on a pit by pit basis.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry met NUM representatives on 12 February 2003. The discussion included these proposals and the likelihood of coal investment aid that would support particular projects to maintain access to reserves and hence production at specified mines. The need for changed working practices, including flexible working, to maximise the value of aided projects was also discussed and the NUM representatives did not repudiate the position that Dr. Roxburgh had reported.

Foreign Investment (London)

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* assessments and *(b)* surveys her Department has (i) used and (ii) commissioned to assess the reasons why foreign companies (A) open and (B) maintain offices in London. [163369]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Through UK Trade & Investment's investor development programme, which entails systematic contact—both in the UK and overseas—with the senior management of many overseas-owned companies present in the UK, we assess the reasons why companies set up in the UK and the factors that will impact on future business location decisions.

This is backed up by company surveys, commissioned by UK Trade & Investment. These are available on request from UK Trade & Investment. They are focused on the national picture.

New Businesses (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many new businesses have been established in Crosby since 1997. [160441]

Nigel Griffiths: Barclays Bank's latest survey of business creation includes non-VAT registered firms and shows that there were 93,100 business start ups in England and Wales, including 500 in Sefton Local Authority (for which Crosby is a constituency), in the third quarter of 2003. The latest yearly figures show 384,900 business start ups in England and Wales in the 12 months ending September 2003. This represents a 3 per cent. increase on the year before. Data for local authorities are not available for before 2003.

DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations for Sefton Local Authority (for which Crosby is a constituency) are shown in the table for the period 1997 to 2002. Data for 2003 will be available in Autumn 2004.

VAT Registrations: 1997–2002

	Sefton
1997	570
1998	585
1999	565
2000	545
2001	580
2002	560

Note:
VAT registrations and de-registrations, which do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has risen in each year since 1997. Similarly, businesses that de-register will not necessarily have closed. Only 1.8 million out of 3.8 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2002.

Source:
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2002, Small Business Service.

E-Auctions

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has received on the conduct of e-auctions. [162866]

Mr. Sutcliffe: During the last 18 months I have received 12 representations on the conduct of e-auctions. Consumers have experienced problems with payment transmission services and in obtaining redress when goods for which they have paid have not been delivered.

The Department issued guidance on 29 December 2003 advising consumers how to guard against internet auction risks—such as lack of information about the seller—and about their rights when buying from private individuals. The guidance is available from the Consumer Gateway at http://www2.consumer.gov.uk/consumer_ web/e-shopping.htm#5.

Post Offices (Chelmsford and Mid-Essex)

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what steps were taken during the development of the post office area plan for Chelmsford and mid Essex to assess the consequences of the plan for levels of road accidents and fatalities involving pedestrians; [162991]

(2) what assessment has been made of the change in the number of road journeys consequent on the closure of sub-post offices in Chelmsford over the last 18 months; [162992]

(3) what assessment has been made of the health and social care implications of the closure of sub-post offices in Chelmsford over the last 18 months. [162993]

Mr. Timms: There are operational matters for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to write direct to the hon. Member.

Postal Services

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consultations she undertook with *(a)* Postwatch, *(b)* Post Office users, *(c)* the CBI and *(d)* FSB before approving as shareholder the retiming of the first or main postal delivery after 9 a.m. [162495]

Mr. Timms: Conditions on the delivery of mail are a licensing matter for the regulator, Postcomm. The Postal Services Act 2000, and the Licence granted by Postcomm under it, requires Royal Mail to make one daily delivery to every household in the United Kingdom. It does not specify the time at which this has to be made. Postcomm, therefore, does not have authority to dictate the time of the daily delivery. Postwatch (The Consumer Council) has worked closely with Royal Mail (and the CWU) throughout the process to ensure that the change to a single daily delivery balances commercial necessity against customer need. Postwatch undertook extensive research jointly with Royal Mail to ensure that any adverse effect on consumers was minimised. Postwatch advocated local flexibility rather than a "one-size-fits-all" solution and continues to work with Royal Mail at a local level to help ensure a smooth transition.

Research and Development

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the effect of the research and development tax credit on levels of investment in research and development. [163317]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Yeovil's question 156766 on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 796W.

HOME DEPARTMENT

"Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime: A New Approach"

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what method was used to estimate the effect on crime rates of the increased use of prison set out on page 16 of "Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime: A New Approach"; and if he will list the sources used in the preparation of the estimate. [161722]

Paul Goggins: The estimate of the effect on crime rates of increased prison was made by Patrick Carter's team as part of his independent review of correctional services. I understand that the estimate was arrived at after examining a number of sources both international and domestic that encompassed a range of different techniques and results.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the evidential basis is for the statement on page 15 of "Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime: A New Approach" that 100,000 persistent offenders commit 50 per cent. of all crime. [161723]

Paul Goggins: The statistic is taken from Annexe B of the Criminal Justice System document, Criminal Justice; The Way ahead, published February 2001.

Animal Welfare

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information, the effects of his Department's policies and action in relation to animal welfare since 2 May 1997 for the Vale of Clwyd constituency. [153135]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have been asked to reply.

Records are not held at constituency level but key achievements since 1997 include:

Treaty Protocol on Animal Welfare which amends the Treaty of Rome and recognises animals as sentient beings, not merely commodities to be traded.Agreement on the farm animal welfare Directive setting minimum standards across the EU, implemented by the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations 2000.Improved standards for laying hens, which include a ban on barren battery cages throughout the EU and a Europe-wide ban on close—confinement sow stalls, which have been banned in the UK since January 1999. The creation of Defra in 2001 provided an opportunity to move the responsibility for welfare of all animals kept by man to a single Minister (with the exception of animals kept for experimental purposes which stays with the Home Office). Following consultation, the Government are undertaking a review of 21 animal welfare Acts relating to captive and domestic animals with the aim of consolidating them into one Animal Welfare Act. We hope to publish a draft Bill later this year.

Asylum Seekers

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Burmese asylum seekers have been deported to Burma in each of the past three years; and what information he has received concerning the fate of those people following their repatriation. [159885]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* Estimates of the number of Burmese nationals who had sought asylum at some stage and who were removed from the UK in the period January 2001 to September 2003 (the latest available figures) are shown in the table. These figures include persons departing 'voluntarily' after the initiation of enforcement action against them, removals to a safe third country and persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Returns Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration.

Removals and voluntary[1] departures of principal asylum applicants (excluding dependants): January 2001 to September 2003[2,3,4]

	Burma (Myanmar)
2001	*
2002	10
January to September 2003	5

[1] Including persons departing "voluntarily" after enforcement action had been initiated against them.
[2] May include removals to a safe third country.
[3] Data are estimated due to date quality issues on the IND databases.
[4] Provisional figures.
Note:
Date are rounded to nearest five with * denoting 1 or 2

Information on the destination of these removals and whether they were forcibly removed or departed voluntarily is not available, except by examination of individual case-files at disproportionate cost.

All asylum (and human rights) claims made by Burmese nationals are considered on their individual merits in accordance with our obligations under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Should a claim be refused and any appeal before the independent Immigration Appellate Authority be unsuccessful, it means that for that individual it is safe to return.

In making decisions about removing failed asylum seekers, the Home Office takes full account of up to date information from a wide range of sources about the situation in the country of origin. These sources include intergovernmental organisations (such as the UN), governmental sources (including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and human rights organisations (for example Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch).

If an individual asylum seeker establishes a need for international protection they would not be returned. We do not have information on individuals returned to Burma and there would be difficulties in determining the extent to which any problems the individuals experienced could be attributed to their having been returned as failed asylum seekers.

Charities Bill

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish the draft Charities Bill. [162298]

Fiona Mactaggart: The publication of a draft Charities Bill this Session was announced in the Queen's Speech and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has undertaken to publish such a Bill as soon as possible.

Cheadle Royal Hospital

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 714W, on Cheadle Royal Hospital, if he will place in the Library a copy of the reply from the Director of Operations to the hon. Member for Cheadle. [160458]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Director of Operations wrote to the hon. Member on 9 March and a copy is now available in the Library.

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 714–15W, on Cheadle Royal Hospital, when the administrative arrangements for challenge and review of formal decisions of the Charity Commission were implemented. [160511]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Commission introduced administrative arrangements for challenge and review of its decisions on 1 January 2000. Full details, including published staff guidance and details of the decision reviews carried out to date, can be found on the Commission's website (www.charitycommission.gov.uk)

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 714–15W, on Cheadle Royal Hospital, when the Charity Commission reported the disposals of Cheadle Royal Hospital assets to Parliament; when the reports were audited by the National Audit Office; and when the Public Accounts Committee reviewed the audited reports. [160512]

Fiona Mactaggart: I advised the hon. Member of the scrutiny arrangements for the Charity Commission in my answer of 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 715W.

The Commission's statutory annual report on its operations made to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, further to section 1(5) of the Charities Act 1993, is laid by him before Parliament. This details the Commission's activities, operations and performance against its targets for the year. It also contains details of any significant developments in the operating environment during the year as identified at the time of publication. It does not contain details of individual charities and their activities except for a small number of examples that serve to illustrate the wide range of the Commission's work as registrar and regulator of the 187,316 charities on the Central Register of Charities (as at 31 March 2003). The Commission's latest report for the financial year 2002–03 is publicly available on its website (www.charitycommission.gov.uk).

The Commission is also required to produce a separate annual report as part of its Resource Accounts, which it prepares and publishes as required by Her Majesty's Treasury. The financial statements in the Commission's Resource Accounts are audited by the National Audit Office who may choose to refer particular aspects to the Public Accounts Committee for further inquiry. The latest Resource Accounts for 2002–03 are publicly available on the Commission's website.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many crimes have been recorded in each constituency in Lancashire in each of the last five years, broken down by type of crime; [156514]

(2) how many *(a)* burglaries, *(b)* car thefts, *(c)* acts of vandalism, *(d)* muggings, *(e)* rapes and *(f)* violent attacks were reported in Chorley constituency in each of the last three years. [157683]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in a table that has been placed in the Library.

Figures for crimes recorded by the police are not broken down by constituency areas. However, they are available at Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) level. There are currently fourteen CDRPs in Lancashire, including Chorley. CDRPs broadly equate to Local Authority areas, and financial year figures are available for 1999–2000, 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03.

Figures for recorded crime offences are available at CDRP level for six key offences groups only: violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery, burglary in a dwelling, theft of a motor vehicle, and theft from a vehicle.

The number of offences recorded may have been affected by the adoption of the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). The NCRS was officially implemented across England and Wales in April 2002. Lancashire police adopted the Standard prior to this, in August 2000. The NCRS has particularly impacted in violent crime offences. Therefore, following the introduction of the Standard, numbers of recorded crimes are not directly comparable with previous years.

Criminal Assets

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his Answer of 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 899W, on criminal assets, what proportion of *(a)* cash seizures, *(b)* confiscation orders, *(c)* restraint orders and *(d)* freezing orders made to date were related to drug offences; what proportion of the money which has been successfully recovered to date has been allocated to (A) crime reduction projects and (B) central Treasury funds; and how he plans to allocate amounts seized in future. [161791]

Caroline Flint: The information in relation to cash seizures is not available. I understand from the Crown Prosecution Service that 85 per cent. of confiscation orders and 44 per cent. of restraint orders made under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 related to drug offences. I understand from the Assets Recovery Agency that 57 per cent. of the freezing orders related to drug offences.

All receipts from recovered assets are allocated to a range of initiatives in the asset recovery field. A new police incentivisation scheme will be introduced in 2004–05 that will enable police forces to receive a share of the criminal assets that are recovered locally. Police forces will benefit by receiving a third of all the recovered assets above £40 million in 2004–05, increasing to a half for 2005–06. The maximum benefit available to the police will be £43 million in 2004–05 rising to £65 million in 2005–06. The Government will be using the first £40 million to help fund existing commitments in the asset recovery field.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the *(a)* work and *(b)* effectiveness of the Criminal Cases Review Commission. [159664]

Paul Goggins: The Criminal Cases Review Commission acts as a safety net to the Criminal Justice System. I commend the hard work of its Chairman, Members and staff in establishing the Commission as an authoritative and respected body. The Commission has established a high reputation for its decision making, for

impartiality, openness and thoroughness and has won the confidence of the public, the legal profession and related pressure groups.

Two thirds of the Commission's referrals have lead to quashed convictions or reduced sentences.

The Commission will be able to analyse the legal and investigative issues that still commonly arise in miscarriages of justice. The Commission will be able to provide advice to other stakeholders and agencies within the criminal justice system on actions that could help to minimise their incidence. The Commission's main priority, however, is to deal with its case accumulation, minimising the waiting time for applicants particularly those in custody. With additional funding, the Commission has made a considerable reduction in the number of cases awaiting a review from the 1999 peak. I have every confidence that the Commission will continue to make good progress towards this goal despite the recent unexpected rise in the number of applications.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions the Criminal Cases Review Commission has received representations from people concerned about *(a)* a body of expert evidence and *(b)* particular investigative methods and subsequently investigated these concerns. [159706]

Paul Goggins: A large number of applications to the Commission have raised concerns over expert evidence and investigative methods. Such concerns when raised are considered and if necessary investigated further. Finding the precise number of such cases would involve a search of over 6, 500 records, which would incur disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his consultation with the Criminal Cases Review Commission regarding extension of its powers under section 17 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1995. [159707]

Paul Goggins: Home Office officials met most recently with the Criminal Cases Review Commission on 4 February 2004 to discuss further their proposals for extending their powers under section 17 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1995. The proposals involve the complex issue of third party disclosure and are still under active consideration.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department will provide the Criminal Cases Review Commission with additional resources in order for it to *(a)* review and *(b)* research non-referred cases. [159708]

Paul Goggins: At the present time it would be inappropriate to distract the Criminal Cases Review Commission from its main goal of minimising case accumulation.

Criminal Records Bureau

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Criminal Records Bureau checks were outstanding at the most recent date for which information is available for *(a)* less than four weeks, *(b)* four to six weeks, *(c)* six to 12 weeks, *(d)* 12 to 26 weeks and *(e)* more than 26 weeks; and what steps are being taken to reduce delays in responding. [162211]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The information that the hon. Member for Isle of Wight has asked for on the number of outstanding checks broken down in the manner requested is not available from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) systems.

A weekly report is produced by the CRB to establish the number of outstanding applications held within the computer system. This report displays applications that have been outstanding from one week to six weeks. These figures are broken down further to show the number of applications that have been with the CRB from 0-four weeks, four-six weeks and over six weeks.

As at 29 February 2004, the CRB has a total of 105,218 applications awaiting completion.

Of these applications:

97,756 are less than four-weeks-old

5,901 are four to six-weeks-old

1,561 are over six-weeks-old

The number of applications awaiting completion over six weeks, approximately 1.5 per cent. of the overall total, falls well within the 5 per cent. tolerance, as stipulated in our Public Service Standard.

The CRB continues to monitor its performance and implement measures aimed at minimising backlogs and streamlining the Disclosure process. These measures have included:

consulting Registered Bodies on how to encompass greater responsibility within their role, enabling speedier authentication of Disclosure applicants;

minimising data quality errors by providing advice and assistance to applicants and Counter signatories on completing the application form;

replacing our previous manually produced Fastrack system with an automated process;

providing additional resources to specific areas of concern.

For example, five members of CRB staff have been seconded to alleviate backlogs at Local Police Forces.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what identity verification processes were incorporated into the contract specification at the time that the Criminal Records Bureau let the contract to Capita; what identity verification processes are being used; and if he will make a statement; [162600]

(2) what information sources are used by the Criminal Records Bureau in verifying postal addresses; and if he will make a statement; [162601]

(3) what sources of data he has directed that the Criminal Records Bureau should use in conducting identity verification processes. [162602]

Ms Blears: The initial contract with Capita, which envisaged the majority of applications being made via the telephone, included an on-line identity check using Experian's on-line system. This was deemed to be the most efficient method as an applicant could be asked for sufficient information to "pass" the check while making the application via the call centre.

The subsequent introduction of the paper application channel, which now accounts for 87 per cent. of all applications made this route unviable as specific questions aimed at obtaining a pass score cannot be asked on a paper application form.

In line with the recommendation of the Independent Review Team appointed by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary in September 2002 powers have been taken in the Criminal Justice Act 2003 to make Registered Bodies solely responsible for identity and address verification. The CRB issues guidance to Registered Bodies showing the type of documentation a Registered Body should use to verify name and address. The CRB Code of Practice requires Registered Bodies to check documents contained in this list

The CRB does use "postcode look up" to verify that an address exists but does not carry out any further address checks. The revised contract with Capita reflects this.

Custody Suites (Cornwall)

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many custody suite facilities are available in Cornwall; and what plans he has for additional custody suites. [162648]

Ms Blears: There is currently one designated custody suite operating in Cornwall. This is at Camborne police station, which has 25 cells. However, St Austell police station, which has eight cells and is not designated as a custody suite, is currently being used as a temporary option while the 11 cells at Newquay police station are undergoing extensive refurbishment. When Newquay reopens in May this year, St Austell police station will no longer be used as a custody suite. Planners are currently considering the designs for a new custody suite at Launceton and subject to planning consent, this will be open in 2005 and will provide an additional 21 cells. There are other cells available in police stations across Cornwall that are not part of custody suite facilities.

Firearms

Mr. Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to set up a working group to review the Firearms Rules 1998. [161770]

Caroline Flint: Any review of the Firearms Rules 1998 would be largely consequential on the outcome of the review we are undertaking of the principal legislation. Certain aspects of the Rules are, however, currently being looked at by a group of practitioners on which the police and shooting organisations are represented.

Historical Abuse Appeal Panel

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the *(a)* work and *(b)* findings of the Historical Abuse Appeal Panel, established by the Criminal Cases Review Commission. [159712]

Paul Goggins: The Historical Abuse Appeal Panel was not established by the Criminal Cases Review Commission. It was created by a specialist group of lawyers. The Commission is working with the Panel on a number of applications that involve convictions for child sex abuse in care homes.

Immigration Appeals

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many immigration appeal cases processed by the Appeals Processing Centre are awaiting despatch to the Immigration Appellate Authority. [161976]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 16 March 2004]:* Figures at the end of February showed that there were approximately 2,000 entry clearance cases and 2,000 in country immigration cases which had been processed by the Appeals Processing Centre and were awaiting despatch to the Immigration Appellate Authority.

Computer Misuse Act

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to ask the Sentencing Guidelines Council to frame guidelines in relation to the Computer Misuse Act 1990. [162413]

Caroline Flint: The Sentencing Guidelines Council was created by the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and has a key role to play in improving consistency in sentencing. It will in due course consider guidelines in respect of all criminal offences.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent *(a)* representations he has received and *(b)* discussions he has had regarding (i) judicial awareness of and (ii) sentencing guidelines in relation to the Computer Misuse Act 1990; and if he will make a statement. [162415]

Caroline Flint: We have not received any representations nor had any discussions with the judiciary in relation to the Computer Misuse Act 1990. However, changes will be made to section 1 of the Computer Misuse Act 1990 to increase the penalty threshold, to allow for the effective punishment of all acts undertaken by hackers and others in committing this offence. This and other changes to the Act will be brought forward when Parliamentary time allows.

Offender Management

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to produce a project initiation document in respect of the National Offender Management Service. [160894]

Paul Goggins: Establishing the National Offender Management Service will include a number of projects. Those individual projects will follow standard government project management procedures.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the management of the female prison estate under the National Offender Management Service arrangements. [161162]

Paul Goggins: The structure of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is yet to be finalised. The implementation team are considering a range of issues including the management of the female prison estate within NOMS.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish a project initiation document in respect of the National Offender Management Service; when he intends to appoint a project manager; and what the delivery date will be. [161163]

Paul Goggins: Establishing the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) will include a number of projects. Those individual projects will follow standard government project management procedures.

Eithne Wallis, former Director General of the National Probation Service, was appointed as change manager on 6 January. She is responsible for the implementation of the National Offender Management Service. A Programme Team to assist with the development of NOMS is being assembled. The National Offender Management Service will come into being on 1 June 2004 and it is anticipated that it will have become fully functional by 2008–09.

Mr. David: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultations he has had with *(a)* employees and trade unions and *(b)* hon. Members about the new National Offender Management Service. [161218]

Paul Goggins: The document "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" sets out the Governments initial response to the review of correctional services carried out by Patrick Carter.

The Home Secretary continues to seek views from key stakeholders on a number of issues raised in that document relating to the effective management of offenders. We are currently considering initial responses.

Prisons

Mrs. Ann Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison officers left prison service employment within *(a)* six months, *(b)* one year and *(c)* two years of becoming an officer in each of the last five years. [160746]

Paul Goggins: Between 1 August 2000 and 31 December 2003, 4,763 new prison officers were recruited (including existing staff who converted to the prison officer grade).

Information on the number of prison officers who left the service in this period during their first two years of service is given in the table. The figures include resignations and dismissals.

	Left within six months of appointment	*Left between six and 12 months of appointment*	*Left between one and two years of appointment*
August to December 2000	11	12	24
2001	21	25	82
2002	46	25	36
2003	87	77	63

Information is not held centrally for staff that left the Service prior to August 2000 and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the *(a)* certified normal accommodation and *(b)* number of prisoners held in each prison establishment was on 31 December for each of the past five years; [160470]

(2) what new accommodation has been provided at each prison establishment in each of the last five years; and how this new accommodation has affected the certified normal accommodation of each establishment. [160471]

Paul Goggins: The Certified Normal Accommodation and total population of each prison in England and Wales on 31 December of each of the past five years will be placed in the Library.

Quashed Convictions

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many quashed convictions arose from the work of *(a)* the Criminal Cases Review Commission between 1997 and 2003 and *(b)* the comparable Home Office unit in the period between 1991 and 1997; and what assessment he has made of the reasons for differences between the two figures. [159663]

Paul Goggins: By 31 March 2003, referrals from the Criminal Cases Review Commission had resulted in 77 convictions being quashed.

Between January 1991 and March 1997, 54 convictions that had been referred to the Criminal Division of the Court of Appeal by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary were quashed (this includes one case where only two of several counts were overturned).

The Criminal Appeal Act 1995 introduced changes that make a direct comparison impossible. The major difference was the introduction of a court appeal process for summary offences. As the Home Secretary could refer only convictions for indictable offences in England and Wales back to the Court of Appeal, C3 Division of Criminal Department's work also included considering the use of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy to free applicants from the consequences of wrongful conviction for summary offences. The Commission's 77 convictions quashed include six from Northern Ireland. The Commission has greater powers to obtain documents etc. than the Secretary of State had, and has more staff than were available in C3 Division.

Racial Harassment

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers preventing racial harassment have been introduced since 1997; and how many times these powers have been used in Crosby. [160549]

Fiona Mactaggart: Prior to 1997 the Race Relations Act (RRA) 1976 already prohibited discrimination on racial grounds. The RRA did not specifically refer to harassment, but it was clear from case law that racial harassment was a type of detriment capable of amounting to the kind of less favourable treatment prohibited by the Act.

As part of its fulfilment of its obligations under the EC Race Directive the UK amended the Race Relations Act 1976 (by virtue of the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003) so as to make it unlawful to harass a person, on grounds of race or ethnic or national origins, in the areas of activity covered by the 1976 Act.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 created new and separate offences where the offences of causing fear and violence or of causing harassment, alarm or distress under the Public Order Act 1986, or the offences of harassment or putting in fear of violence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 were racially aggravated.

Figures for the number of prosecutions in Crosby for this type of offence are not centrally available. Merseyside Police figures for racially aggravated harassment offences (published by the Home Office under the requirements of S95 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991) show a total of 434 recorded offences of this type over the period 1999/2000 to 2001/02.

Shooting

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about excessive noise from gunfire by clay pigeon shooters; and if he will require clay pigeon shooters to attach silencers to their guns. [161028]

Alun Michael: I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, has not received any recent representations on excessive noise from gunfire by clay pigeon shooters. There are no plans to require clay pigeon shooters to attach silencers to their guns.

Mr. Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his policy on responsible and safe shooting sports conducted in accordance with the law. [161766]

Caroline Flint: The Government believe that shooting should be done in a responsible and safe way and in accordance with the law.

Mr. Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met representatives of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation; and what was discussed. [161767]

Caroline Flint: I met representatives of the Association on 8 September 2003 to discuss their concerns about the firearms related provisions in what is now the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Special Constables

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to support the recruitment of special constables. [162745]

Ms Blears: We are determined to boost Special's numbers as a central component of our reform agenda geared towards re-energising volunteering within neighbourhood policing.

We launched a £2.5 million advertising campaign in February to raise the awareness about Specials and their voluntary work. There has been a significant increase in expressions of interest in the Specials with, for example, calls to the recruitment hotline leaping from around 60 in the week before the TV ad first aired, to over 1,800 in the week of the 23 February.

The campaign was also timed to coincide with the second annual "National special Weekend" held on the 28–29 February, with all 43 Forces in England and Wales working to raise Specials' profile and to focus on local recruitment and employer support initiatives.

These measures are part of a wider initiative to increase Specials Number and effectiveness, which has also seen all 43 police Forces awarded a share of £2.75 million "Capacity building" funding to help develop and improve Specials' recruitment, management and retention. We hope that by 2006/07 another 3,000 Specials will have been recruited through wider public awareness and better management and communication by Forces.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Betting

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans her Department has for regulating betting exchange. [163143]

Mr. Caborn: The draft Gambling Bill now being scrutinised by a Committee of both Houses includes a number of proposals for the better regulation of betting exchanges.

Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many cases of computer misuse there were in her Department in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003, broken down by category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [163289]

Mr. Caborn: There were no cases of computer misuse in DCMS in either 1997 or 2003.

Grants (Religious Buildings)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her policy is on the future of conservation and restoration grants to *(a)* English cathedrals, *(b)* English parish churches and *(c)* other religious buildings. [162839]

Mr. Caborn: The Government channel their funding for the built historic environment through English Heritage, which is the largest source of non-Lottery grant funding for listed cathedrals and churches in England.

English Heritage runs a Cathedral Repairs Grant Scheme for Church of England and Roman Catholic Cathedrals which are listed grade I or II* and/or are situated within a conservation area. A budget of £2 million was made available for this scheme in financial year 2003–04 to assist with urgent repairs to high-level roofs and masonry to keep the cathedral

building structurally stable and weather-tight. Grant offers have already been made under this scheme against a budget of £2 million for 2004–05. Following a review of all its grant schemes, and now that the majority of big repair projects to cathedrals in England have been completed, English Heritage has earmarked a budget of £3 million for this scheme in 2005–2008.

Together with the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage funds the Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England 2002–05, which welcomes applications from all faith groups and denominations, both Christian and non-Christian, provided they are formally constituted religious organisations. £30 million was made available in financial year 2003–04 for grants for urgent repairs to listed places of worship in regular use. This scheme has benefited a large number of parish churches in England.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport administers the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, an interim scheme introduced in the 2001 Budget, which has returned in grant aid the difference between five per cent and the actual amount of Value Added Tax (VAT) paid on eligible repairs and maintenance. In his Budget announcement on 17 March 2004, the Chancellor of the Exchequer confirmed that claims for all eligible works carried out on and after 1 April 2004 will receive grant payments under the scheme to cover the full amount of VAT paid. Unless a permanent VAT reduced rate is achieved in the meantime as part of negotiations on a review of the EU rules governing VAT reduced rates, this scheme will continue until 31 March 2006. Listed places of worship belonging to all formally constituted religious organisations are eligible to apply to the scheme. Around 4,500 listed places of worship throughout the United Kingdom have so far benefited from the scheme, which has paid out over £18 million.

National Lottery

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of Lottery funding has been spent on *(a)* health, *(b)* education and *(c)* environmental projects; and if she will make a statement. [162908]

Estelle Morris: One third of Lottery money for good causes is distributed by the New Opportunities Fund (NOF), which makes grants to health, education and environment projects. Of the money distributed by NOF, the approximate breakdown between health, education and environment projects as at February 2004 was as follows:

	Percentage of overall committed funding	*Percentage of overall payments (i.e. spend)*
Health	29	22
Education	57	65
Environment	14	13

Data on grants made by other National Lottery distributors to projects with a health, education and environment dimension are not collected.

Sporting Contacts (Ban)

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether on 28 October 1997 Ministers had the power to invoke a ban on sporting contacts with other countries. [162474]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* In October 1997, as now, the power existed to use visa controls to deny anyone entry from countries whose nationals require visas to visit the UK, including sports people where appropriate.

Television Ownership

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 15 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 57–8W, on television ownership, what estimates her Department has made of the number of United Kingdom households that do not own a television in each of the last 10 years. [163307]

Estelle Morris: The estimated number of households without a television in the United Kingdom in each of the last ten years is set out in the following table:

March	*Thousands of households*[1,2]
1994	646
1995	662
1996	692[3]
1997	664
1998	646
1999	641
2000	625
2001	599
2002	544
2003	515

[1] Based on data from the British Audience Research Board and from official estimates of numbers of Households

[2] Revisions to data prior to 2001 are expected as official household estimates for these years are to be revised.

[3] The higher figure in 1996 may not be reliable. Since the percentage of households not owning a television is small, the survey measuring this is inevitably prone to the incidence of sampling variation.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment has been made of the refugee situation in *(a)* Zhare Dasht, *(b)* other camps within Afghanistan and *(c)* camps set up in Pakistan by refugees fleeing Afghanistan; and what support the UK is providing to (i) NGOs and (ii) the United Nations Refugee Agency to address the refugee problem. [162969]

Hilary Benn: DFID provided over £9 million funding to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP) 2003 Afghanistan appeals. UNHCR and WFP have contracted local and international Non-Governmental Organisations to help provide basic health care, education, food and water in the refugee camps.

Refugees are now returning home. Recently, community leaders from refugee camps inside Afghanistan issued a written statement that they felt conditions in the North have now improved sufficiently for refugees to return. As a result, 30 families (118 individuals) from the Zahre Dasht camp returned to Farayab province on 21 March. UNHCR jointly facilitated the return and provided shelter, income generation opportunities and water to vulnerable returnees in their areas of origin.

From a high of one million refugees living inside Afghanistan in 2001, there are now fewer than 200,000. Similarly, over three million refugees have returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran.

Brazil/Bolivia

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department has allocated to UK non-governmental organisations this year for work in *(a)* Brazil and *(b)* Bolivia; how this sum is expected to change in real terms in the future; and if he will make a statement. [162962]

Hilary Benn: Under DFID's Civil Society Challenge Fund, the value of firm offers of support to UK NGOs for specific activities in Brazil and Bolivia in 2004–05 is £204,204.00 and £336,730.00 respectively. In addition, £454,589.00 has been provisionally allocated for regional projects, including possible interventions in Brazil and Bolivia. Future offers of support will depend on the numbers and quality of proposals submitted by civil society organisations.

In September 2003, £28,904.00 was provided to Helpage International through the Latin America bilateral programme in support of activities to be undertaken between September 2003 and August 2004 in Bolivia.

DFID will also be providing £61 million in strategic support in 2004–05 to 19 major UK based Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the form of global Partnership Programme Agreements (PPA). A number of these organisations currently support activities in Bolivia and Brazil. From 2005–06, DFID is proposing to increase partnership funding, to include PPA and NGO's working in middle-income countries and Latin America in particular.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which UK non-governmental organisations funded by his Department carry out work in *(a)* Brazil and *(b)* Bolivia. [162963]

Hilary Benn: The UK Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) funded by DFID, which have programmes in Brazil and Bolivia, are shown in the following list:

Brazil

Action Aid
CAFOD
CARE International
Childhope
Christian Aid
Concern Universal
Everychild
International Service
Leprosy Relief Association (LEPRA)
OXFAM
Save the Children Fund
War on Want
WWF

Bolivia

Action Aid
CAFOD
CARE International
Christian Aid
Helpage International
Homeless International
International Service
Intermediate Technology for Development Group (ITDG)
Marie Stopes International
OXFAM
Plan International
Save the Children Fund
WWF

Drinking Water Wells

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the EU project to dig 50 wells for drinking water; how many of these have been completed; and what steps are being taken to reclaim funds misappropriated in relation to this project. [161699]

Hilary Benn: The "Ysaka" project was approved and started in 2000, and implementation was delegated to a Management Unit led by two co-directors (one European and one Paraguayan). Seven wells have been completed to date. Up to December 2002, the European Commission had disbursed a total of 3.2 million euro to this project.

Serious financial anomalies were uncovered in January by the Commission's annual audit for the period of 1 January to 31 December 2002. The two co-directors were dismissed immediately and supervision of the project was transferred directly to the European Commission's delegation to Paraguay. The Commission's anti-fraud unit is currently conducting an investigation that will seek to recoup missing funds. In the meantime the Government of Paraguay have filed a criminal complaint against the two co-directors. DFID and the Foreign Office will continue to monitor the situation.

DFID does not have a bilateral assistance programme for Paraguay.

Energy Systems

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) how he plans to develop renewable energy supplies within broader sustainable development and poverty reduction programmes; [162044]

(2) what steps he is taking to enable developing countries to have equal access to upfront funding for renewable and conventional energy systems. [162043]

Hilary Benn: Over the past 10 years, DFID has funded about £3.6 million of applied research on renewable energy, covering all the main renewable energy technologies, about half of this in the last four years.

We recognise the importance of access to affordable and reliable energy services to economic growth and development, drawing on the full range of appropriate technology options, including renewable energy. This was a key outcome of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), and was included among the range of actions needed to reduce poverty.

As a follow-up to the WSSD, DFID is working with several international networks to promote improved access to energy services, including the Global Village Energy Partnership and the EU Energy Initiative. These programmes involve dialogue with developing countries about their energy needs in support of their poverty reduction objectives. Most countries possess a range of indigenous natural resources that may help meet requirements such cooking, heating, lighting and water pumping. Where they are practical and financially feasible, renewable energy resources may have an important role to play.

In addition, DFID is taking a lead role in discussions with the World Bank about increasing the share of renewable energy in meeting the energy needs of developing countries, wherever this is feasible and financially viable.

EU Aid

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the EU's *(a)* humanitarian assistance and *(b)* international development assistance budget was in each of the last five years. [162938]

Hilary Benn: The following table, sets out the European Commission's humanitarian and official development assistance spend over the last five years for which this information is available.

European Commission Disbursements to All Developing Countries ($ M)

	Total Net Official Development Assistance (ODA)	*Emergency Aid*
2002	6263	510
2001	5517	526
2000	4414	519
1999	4911	677
1998	5124	501

Source:
Development Assistance Committee, Destination of Official Development Assistance and Official Aid—Disbursements (Table 2a)

Food Aid

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much customs levy the Government paid on food aid given to developing countries in 2003–04. [162189]

Hilary Benn: As import or customs duties represent an additional cost that would reduce the overall amount of development assistance provided, all UK development assistance is conditional on being free of all import or customs duties. Food aid provided by the Department for International Development is given as cash only in response to specific appeals so would not attract customs duties.

In 2002–03 DFID provided food aid to the value of £65 million.

In 2004 the EC provision for food aid is 419 million euro of which the UK share is 19 per cent. EC regulations stipulate this is also free of import or customs duties.

Guatemala

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the extent of child labour in Guatemala. [162607]

Hilary Benn: Child labour is a significant problem in Guatemala with estimates of the number ranging from 550,000 to 900,000. The Government of Guatemala have ratified the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions, which call for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, the rehabilitation of child labourers, and the prevention of child labour. They have also pledged to create a commission to examine the requirement for new regulations and the enforcement of existing labour legislation, but they face many constraints in putting these commitments fully in to effect. DFID will continue to monitor the Government of Guatemala's progress in doing so.

The International Programme for the Elimination of Child Poverty (IPEC) programme of the ILO is active in Guatemala. The programme focuses on child labour in eight sectors including coffee and broccoli cultivation and firework production.

Iraq

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how the war in Iraq has affected progress towards the Millennium Development Goals of *(a)* halving by 2015 the number of people in Iraq who suffer from hunger, *(b)* halving by 2015 the number of people in Iraq without sustainable access to safe drinking water, *(c)* improving the mortality rate for children under five in Iraq, *(d)* achieving gender equality in primary education in Iraq and *(e)* moving towards universal youth literacy in Iraq. [162893]

Hilary Benn: Under Saddam Hussein's regime, Iraq was moving away from the Millennium Development Goals. The provision of health care, education and essential services declined significantly between the 1980s and 2003. Iraq's position on the Human development Index fell from 76th in 1990 to 126th in 2000.

Following Saddam's overthrow, the international community pledged $32 billion in assistance for 2004–2007 at the Madrid Donors' Conference last October. A significant proportion of this finance will be invested in health, education and essential services including water supply and sanitation. Consideration is also being given to reducing Iraq's unsustainable external debt. This support, together with Iraq's considerable natural and human resources, should enable the country to move quickly towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals in the coming years.

Statistics are not available on progress over the last year on the specific Goals referred to in the question.

Malaria

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action he is taking to tackle malaria in sub-saharan Africa. [162972]

Hilary Benn: Great progress was made in reducing malarial mortality in the 1970s and 1980s, yet many parts of Africa are now seeing an increase in the number of deaths from malaria. A key cause is the increase in the resistance to anti-malarial drugs and the lack of affordable alternatives. In addition the capacity of health systems in sub Saharan Africa is often inadequate to respond effectively to malaria. Nonetheless, malaria remains a disease that is preventable, treatable and curable.

Since 1998 the Department for International Development (DFID) has provided in excess of £110 million to support malaria control activities globally and at country level. At the global level this include support to Roll Back Malaria; support to the Medical Research Council; support to the Malaria Consortium Resource Centre; and initiatives to help find new low-cost malaria treatments. DFID has committed US$ 280 million over seven years to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM). The GFATM will fund distribution of insecticide impregnated bednets and appropriate ant-malarial medication.

DFID also supports malaria control activities at country-level through our bilateral county programmes, either through direct support to the health sector or through general budget support. DFID is committed to supporting national Governments and their partners to help ensure that effective drugs and commodities, including effective anti-malarial drugs, are accessible to the poor. Since 1997, DFID has committed £1.5 billion to strengthen health systems to deliver vital drugs and health care treatment.

Press Officers

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many press officers were employed in his Department in each year from 1990–91 to 2003–04; what the total cost was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [162857]

Hilary Benn: The information for all years from 1996–97 is as follows:

	Number of press officers	*Annual Cost (£000)*
1996–97	6	195
1997–98	6	243
1998–99	4	240
1999–2000	3.3	100
2000–01	4.5	150
2001–02	4	148
2002–03	5	191
2003–04	6	230

Information for 1990–95 is not centrally available and could not be obtained without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Search and Rescue Dogs

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many search and rescue dogs based in the UK are available to attend disasters. [162696]

Hilary Benn: There are twelve collapsed structure search and rescue dogs that are registered with the National Search and Rescue dog group of which two are presently quarantined following their deployment to the Bam earthquake and two are being kept in Spain.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what funding the Department made available for the provision of search and rescue dogs in each of the last five years. [162697]

Hilary Benn: The provision of search and rescue dogs is managed and supported by the non-governmental organisations themselves that comprise the National Search and Rescue dog group. DFID meets the costs of their deployment and return when the dogs are used overseas as part of a United Kingdom response to natural disasters such as earthquakes. It is not possible to disaggregate the deployment costs of the dogs as they are one part of a larger search and rescue effort and immediate response that usually also includes the delivery of other relief items by the same chartered aircraft.

Water

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will increase resources made available for water management in Africa. [163374]

Hilary Benn: DFID's overall aim is to reduce global poverty and promote sustainable development, in particular through achieving the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Our goal in the water sector is to enable poor people to lead healthier and more productive lives by helping to increase and sustain their access to safe drinking water supply and appropriate sanitation.

The UK has worked hard to improve aid effectiveness by untying aid, focusing support on strategies drawn up by developing countries themselves, harmonising our assistance with other donors, and the use of new means of aid, such as direct budget support. More effective use of aid therefore, means moving away from donors allocating funding to selected sectors or to donor-led projects, and moving towards providing support that is consistent with national poverty reduction strategies. For this reason, DFID budgets according to regions and countries, and allows country programmes to determine priorities according to national plans.

DFID's strategy for water and sanitation is therefore aimed at seeking to ensure that water and sanitation issues are given the right level of priority within developing countries' plans although evidence suggests that this is not always the case. It is for this reason that DFID has recently published a Water Action Plan,

which sets out how we intend to take this work forward. The Plan sets out what needs to be done at the national, regional and international level. The key elements are: making sure water and sanitation issues figure prominently in policy discussions with our main partner countries in their reform agendas; providing evidence of the links between improved water management, water supply and sanitation and achieving all the MDGs, and ensuring that we are making use of this evidence in our policy dialogue; improving the way the international system works, by focusing support on key international partnerships and networks, particularly those that can improve co- ordination in the water sector.

The next step will be to put the plan into operation.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

New Entrepreneur Scholarship

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people have benefited from the New Entrepreneur Scholarship programme since its creation. [163320]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: 40 scholars participated in the initial pilots in 2000/01 (in Greenwich, Manchester and Cornwall) of whom 75 per cent. completed. 850 scholars participated in the national pilot during 2001/02 and 2002/03 of whom 85 per cent. completed. Following the success of the pilots the programme has been extended until at least 2006/07. 1,147 scholars have been recruited to the programme in 2003/04 with an expected completion rate of 90 per cent.

"Funding of a Better Future"

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with the Association of London Government about the Funding of a Better Future report. [163379]

Mr. Miliband: I wrote to Sir Robin Wales on 18 November 2003 to thank him for sending me a copy of the Funding a Better Future report. In my reply I noted the work being done to ensure London schools receive maximum benefit from all available sources of funding, and welcomed his views on how best to ensure the coherence of funding streams relating to the Extended Schools initiative. Officials meet regularly with the Association of London Government to discuss a range of issues, including funding for London schools, in the context of the London Challenge Programme.

Education

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils in *(a)* North East Lincolnshire and *(b)* North Lincolnshire local education authority left school with no qualifications in each year since 1997. [162582]

Mr. Miliband: Information on pupils leaving school is not available, however, the percentage of 15-year-old pupils that failed to achieve a pass at GCSE or GNVQ are detailed in the following table:

Percentage of 15 year old pupils[1] achieving no passes at GCSE/GNVQ

Academic year	*North East Lincolnshire*	*North Lincolnshire*
1997	10.9	5.5
1998	10.1	3.9
1999	7.8	3.7
2000	6.7	3.0
2001	5.0	2.7
2002	5.5	2.9
2003	6.4	3.6

[1] Pupils are aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teaching assistants there were in schools in Stroud in each of the last seven years for which figures are available. [162743]

Mr. Miliband: The following table gives the numbers of full-time equivalent teaching assistants employed in maintained schools and non-maintained special schools in Stroud constituency for each year between 1997 and 2003, the latest year for which data are available.

	Number
1997	100
1998	101
1999	122
2000	120
2001	144
2002	167
2003	165

Source:
Annual Schools' Census.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many and what percentage of pupils in Stroud reached the *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* English standard in each of the last seven years; [162819]

(2) how many and what percentage of 11-year old pupils in Stroud reached level four in *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* English in each of the last seven years. [162820]

Mr. Miliband: The results from the 2003 National Curriculum tests showed that 75 per cent. of 11-year-olds in England reached Level 4 in English and 73 per cent. in mathematics. These results represent a significant improvement in standards—of 12 percentage points in English and 11 percentage points in mathematics— since 1997, reflecting the impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies on primary schools. We remain absolutely committed, through our new Primary Strategy, to supporting schools to achieve the ambitious targets we have set for standards of literacy and numeracy.

The following table shows the number and percentage of pupils in Stroud who have achieved level 4 or above in the Key Stage 2 English and mathematics tests since 1997. The results for Stroud are above the national average, with improvements since 1997:

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
English—Number of pupils	870	899	972	1,069	1,118	1,134	1,048
Mathematics—Number of pupils	830	794	939	1,050	1,056	1,120	1,066
English—Percentage of pupils	70	72	76	79	82	82	80
Mathematics—Percentage of pupils	66	64	73	77	77	81	81

Note:
The number of eligible pupils for the Key Stage 2 tests varies slightly from year to year.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of 15 and 16 year-olds in Stroud achieved five or more GCSEs at grade A*-C or GNVQ in each of the last seven years. [162821]

Mr. Miliband: The statistical information requested is detailed in the following table:

Percentage of 15 year old pupils[1] achieving 5 or more GCSE/GNVQ grades A–C*

Percentage

Academic Year	Stroud Parliamentary Constituency	England
1997	55.6	45.1
1998	60.1	46.3
1999	60.5	47.9
2000	61.3	49.2
2001	61.0	50.0
2002	62.9	51.6
2003	65.5	52.9

[1] Pupils are aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of 16–19 year olds in Stroud achieved two A level passes or equivalent in each of the last seven years. [162822]

Mr. Miliband: The statistical information requested is detailed in the following table:

	Number achieving	As percentage of candidates
1997	351	76.0
1998	475	83.2
1999	469	88.2
2000	450	90.9
2001	465	93.4
2002	430	81.4
2003	452	88.5

[1] Age at beginning of academic year.
[2] VCE qualifications included in 2002 and 2003; Advanced GNVQ included in 1997–2001.

Education Funding

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on education in Chorley in each of the last seven years. [161557]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is submitted to the Department according to local education authority areas rather than districts within an area. Chorley is a district of Lancashire local education authority. The information for Lancashire LEA is as follows:

Net current expenditure

	Pre-primary education	Primary education	Pre-primary and primary education	Secondary education	Special schools	School spend	Total spend
1995–96	n/a	n/a	237,669,000	202,690,000	42,144,000	482,503,000	583,921,000
1996–97	n/a	n/a	239,587,000	207,231,000	46,585,000	493,403,000	590,313,000
1997–98	n/a	n/a	242,399,000	211,885,000	49,958,000	504,242,000	600,316,000
1998–99	n/a	n/a	209,279,000	179,286,000	38,631,000	427,196,000	507,425,000
1999–00	9,613,898	216,716,058	226,329,956	204,223,737	40,707,605	471,261,298	523,276,325
2000–01	14,411,530	235,524,422	249,935,952	217,880,659	41,733,773	509,550,384	547,388,079
2001–02	20,261,713	262,169,780	282,431,493	243,372,041	46,335,280	572,138,814	599,945,957

Notes:

1. The financial data are taken from Lancashire LEA's Section 52 Outturn Statement submitted to the DfES from 1999–2000 onwards and the ODPM's R01 statement prior to then.

2. Net current expenditure (NCE) includes expenditure within schools and also that incurred centrally by the LEAs.

3. Expenditure was not distinguished between pre-primary and primary sectors until the inception of the Section 52 outturn statement in 1999–2000.

4. School spend includes net current expenditure on pre-primary education, primary education, secondary education and special schools.

5. Total spend includes school spend plus net current expenditure on education out of school, continuing education and management and support.

6. 1995–96, 1996–97 and 1997–98 figures are for Lancashire LEA prior to local government reorganisation. From 1998–99 onwards parts of Lancashire LEA became Blackburn LEA and Blackpool LEA.

7. 1999–2000 figures reflect the return of GM schools to local authority maintenance.

8. Figures used are quoted in cash terms and are as reported by the LEA.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on education in Buckinghamshire in each of the last seven years. [161577]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is contained in the following table:

Net current expenditure

£

	Pre-Primary Education	*Primary Education*	*Pre-Primary and Primary Education*	*Secondary Education*	*Special Schools*	*School Spend*	*Total Spend*
1995–96	n/a	n/a	108,607,000	72,799,000	21,307,000	202,713,000	249,923,000
1996–97	n/a	n/a	112,070,000	73,504,000	22,543,000	208,117,000	254,977,000
1997–98	n/a	n/a	74,879,000	59,002,000	16,905,000	150,786,000	183,122,000
1998–99	n/a	n/a	77,251,000	62,331,000	17,502,000	157,084,000	187,327,000
1999–2000	2,961,537	81,370,766	84,332,303	86,700,327	14,676,470	185,709,100	209,350,972
2000–01	3,340,949	88,619,682	91,960,631	100,166,066	20,763,485	212,890,182	222,923,306
2001–02	4,597,617	95,433,818	100,031,435	111,692,694	26,257,833	237,981,962	245,130,302

Note:

1. The financial data are taken from Buckinghamshire LEA's Section 52 Outturn Statement submitted to the DfES from 1999–2000 onwards and the ODPM's RO1 statement previously.
2. Net current expenditure (NCE) includes expenditure within schools and also that incurred centrally by the LEAs.
3. Expenditure was not distinguished between pre-primary and primary sectors until the inception of the Section 52 outturn statement in 1999–2000.
4. School spend includes net current expenditure on pre-primary education, primary education, secondary education and special schools.
5. Total spend includes school spend plus net current expenditure on education out of school, continuing education and management and support.
6. 1995–96 and 1996–97 figures are for Buckinghamshire LEA prior to local government re-organisation. From 1997–98 onwards part of Buckinghamshire LEA moved into Milton Keynes LEA.
7. 1999–2000 figures reflect the return of GM schools to local authority maintenance.

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding was spent per pupil in Staffordshire in each of the last seven years. [161842]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is contained in the following table:

Net current expenditure per pupil

	Pre-primary education	*Primary education*	*Pre-primary and primary education*	*Secondary education*	*Special schools*
1995–96	n/a	n/a	1,603	2,198	9,305
1996–97	n/a	n/a	1,664	2,286	9,634
1997–98	n/a	n/a	1,653	2,291	9,809
1998–99	n/a	n/a	1,800	2,383	10,142
1999–2000	6,119	1,972	1,998	2,562	11,409
2000–01	9,331	2,198	2,243	2,783	12,428
2001–02	16,734	2,424	2,509	3,079	14,245

Notes:

1. The financial data are taken from Staffordshire LEA's Section 52 Outturn Statement submitted to the DfES from 1999–2000 onwards and the ODPM's RO1 statement previously.
2. Pupil data are drawn from the Annual Schools Census adjusted to be on a financial year basis.
3. Net current expenditure (NCE) includes expenditure within schools and also that incurred centrally by the LEAs.
4. Expenditure was not distinguished between pre-primary and primary sectors until the inception of the Section 52 outturn statement in 1999–2000.
5. The NCE per pupil figures for pre-primary and primary relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in the pre-primary sector and maintained primary schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained nursery and primary schools sector.
6. The NCE per pupil figures for secondary relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in maintained secondary schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained secondary schools sector.
7. The NCE per pupil figures for special schools relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in maintained special schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained special schools sector.
8. 1995–96 and 1996–97 figures are for Staffordshire LEA prior to local government reorganisation. From 1997–98 onwards part of Staffordshire LEA became Stoke-on Trent LEA.
9. 1999–2000 figures reflect the return of GM schools to local authority maintenance.

Education/Training (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding was made available for adult learning in further education colleges in Greater London in each year since 1997. [163066]

Alan Johnson: The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LSC decides on allocations at individual college and regional level. Information about these allocations is not collected by the Department. This is a matter for the LSC. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Gentleman with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many 16 to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training there were in Greater London in each month since the Connexions service was established, broken down by borough. [163067]

Margaret Hodge: The number of 16–18 year olds in the five London Connexions Partnerships known not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) in each month since the Connexions Service was established is shown in the following table. Information at borough level is not available.

Number of 16–18 year olds known by the Connexions Service not to be in education, employment or training (NEET)

	Central London	East London	North London	South London	West London
2001–02					
April	-	-	*N/A	3,877	-
May	-	-	*N/A	3,856	
June	-	-	2,497	3,672	-
July	-	-	2,514	3,675	-
August	-	-	2,577	3,724	-
September	-	-	2,824	4,107	-
October	-	-	2,955	4,278	-
November	-	-	3,071	4,338	-
December	-	-	3,056	4,389	-
January	-	-	2,896	4,356	-
February	-	-	2,896	4,371	-
March	-	-	2,841	4,343	-
2002–03					
April	-	5,409	2,539	3,117	-
May	-	5,441	2,542	2,999	-
June	3,664	5,252	2,542	2,893	-
July	3,576	5,292	2,551	2,752	-
August	3,545	5,069	2,549	2,663	-
September	4,309	6,315	2,787	2,950	3,441
October	4,501	6,650	2,918	2,977	3,559
November	4,625	7,004	3,144	3,079	3,778
December	4,541	6,849	3,060	2,890	3,826
January	4,605	6,598	3,263	2,755	3,822
February	4,581	6,595	3,185	2,616	3,747
March	4,387	6,476	3,100	2,521	3,711
2003–04					
April	3,109	4,708	1,654	1,447	3,136
May	2,932	4,620	1,544	1,499	2,947
June	2,156	4,822	1,554	1,453	2,025
July	2,165	5,037	1,630	1,450	2,100
August	1,998	5,077	1,636	1,429	1,857
September	2,575	6,098	2,213	2,012	2,553
October	3,073	6,207	2,311	2,201	2,680
November	3,596	7,213	2,418	2,069	2,964
December	3,350	6,964	2,240	1,965	2,550

Notes:

(i) Connexions Partnerships were rolled out over two years commencing April 2001. North London and South London started in April 2001, East London in April 2002, Central London in June 2002 and West London in September 2002. It was expected that the NEET figures would increase during the start up period reflecting the wider remit of the Service to engage with all young people in the relevant age group.

(ii) Data for April 2001 to March 2002 are for 16–19 year olds. Data for 16–18 year olds were not available.

(iii) *Data for April 2001 and May 2001 were unavailable for North London Connexions Partnership due to initial difficulties in establishing coverage of the 16–18 cohorts.

(iv) The number of 16–18 year olds not in education, employment or training increases in September each year as summer school leavers enter the labour market for the first time.

(v) From April 2003 mandatory timescales were introduced for maintaining the currency of a young person's activity and thereby focus attention on the size of the NEET group. The variation between the partnership data from April 2003 indicates both the varying success partnerships have had in applying the follow up rules and the cyclical nature of the NEET group.

EU Accession State Students

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the number of higher education students from the EU accession states after 1 May. [161012]

Alan Johnson: In 2002/03, there were 3,374 full-time undergraduates and 362 part-time undergraduates in the UK from the 10 countries acceding to the EU on 1 May 2004. This represents 0.2 per cent. of the UK and EU domiciled undergraduate student population in UK institutions. The funding made available to HEFCE and English universities for 2004–05 provides for a modest increase in student numbers from EU countries following accession. It is not possible to predict the numbers with certainty at this stage since a decision to study in the UK depends on a number of factors, including the availability of HE in the student's home country and their ability to support their own living costs.

Pupil Funding

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding was spent per pupil in Buckingham in each of the last seven years. [161315]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is submitted to the Department according to local education authority areas, rather than districts within an area. Buckingham is a district of Buckinghamshire local education authority. The information for Buckinghamshire LEA is as follows:

Net current expenditure per pupil

	Pre-primary education	Primary education	Pre-primary and primary education	Secondary education	Special schools
1995–96	n/a	n/a	1,821	2,626	12,809
1996–97	n/a	n/a	1,862	2,616	13,197
1997–98	n/a	n/a	1,862	2,670	14,438
1998–99	n/a	n/a	1,983	2,608	15,177
1999–2000	17,353	2,024	2,089	2,700	12,727
2000–01	19,128	2,245	2,319	3,025	18,310
2001–02	36,634	2,437	2,546	3,334	23,845

Notes:

1. Net current expenditure (NCE) includes expenditure within schools and also that incurred centrally by the LEAs.
2. Expenditure was not distinguished between pre-primary and primary sectors until the inception of the Section 52 outturn statement in 1999–2000.
3. The NCE per pupil figures for pre-primary and primary relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in the pre-primary sector and maintained primary schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained nursery and primary schools sector.
4. The NCE per pupil figures for secondary relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in maintained secondary schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained secondary schools sector.
5. The NCE per pupil figures for special schools relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in maintained special schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained special schools sector.
6. 1995–96 and 1996–97 figures are for Buckinghamshire LEA prior to local government reorganisation. From 1997–98 onwards part of Buckinghamshire LEA moved into Milton Keynes LEA.
7. 1999–2000 figures reflect the return of GM schools to local authority maintenance.
8. The financial data are taken from Buckinghamshire LEA's Section 52 Outturn Statement submitted to the DfES from 1999–2000 onwards and the ODPM's RO1 statement previously.
9. Pupil data are drawn from the Annual Schools Census adjusted to be on a financial year basis.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding was spent per pupil in Chorley in each of the last seven years. [161453]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is submitted to the Department according to local education authority areas rather than districts within an

area. Chorley is a district of Lancashire local education authority. The information for Lancashire LEA is as follows:

Net current expenditure per pupil

	Pre-primary education	*Primary education*	*Pre-primary and primary education*	*Secondary education*	*Special schools*
1995–96	n/a	n/a	1,802	2,551	13,987
1996–97	n/a	n/a	1,805	2,594	15,988
1997–98	n/a	n/a	1,824	2,631	17,315
1998–99	n/a	n/a	2,002	2,701	17,768
1999–2000	7,130	2,108	2,173	2,763	18,487
2000–01	11,033	2,326	2,437	2,914	18,768
2001–02	16,391	2,629	2,797	3,230	20,597

Notes:

1. The financial data are taken from Lancashire LEA's Section 52 Outturn Statement submitted to the DfES from 1999–2000 onwards and the ODPM's R01 statement prior to then.
2. Pupil data are drawn from the Annual Schools Census adjusted to be on a financial year basis.
3. Net current expenditure (NCE) includes expenditure within schools and also that incurred centrally by the LEAs.
4. Expenditure was not distinguished between pre-primary and primary sectors until the inception of the Section 52 outturn statement in 1999–2000.
5. The NCE per pupil figures for pre-primary and primary relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in the pre-primary sector and maintained primary schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained nursery and primary schools sector.
6. The NCE per pupil figures for secondary relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in maintained secondary schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained secondary schools sector.
7. The NCE per pupil figures for special schools relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in maintained special schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained special schools sector.
8. 1995–96, 1996–97 and 1997–98 figures are for Lancashire LEA prior to local government reorganisation. From 1998–99 onwards parts of Lancashire LEA became Blackburn LEA and Blackpool LEA.
9. 1999–2000 figures reflect the return of GM schools to local authority maintenance.

In-service Training (Schools)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether he plans to ringfence budgets for schools for in-service training purposes following the ending of specific support under the Standards Fund. [162742]

Mr. Miliband: No, we are committed to reducing ring-fenced budgets for schools. We believe that schools will get best value from their budgets by managing them as a whole in accordance with their own priorities.

Pupil Mobility

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions his officials have had with the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit about their research into the effect of increased pupil mobility on education in London. [163418]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Officials from the London Challenge Programme have met with the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit to discuss the relevant findings of the London Analytical Report, including those relating to pupil mobility. The London Challenge is addressing the particular challenges faced by schools with high levels of mobility through the Key Stage 3 Strategy and through the trialling of induction mentors in 22 London secondary schools as part of the 'On the Move' project.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether there is evidence of a disproportionate effect in London authorities arising from pupil mobility. [163420]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Pupil mobility in some London schools is significant. Data published in the Ofsted report 'Managing Pupil Mobility' in 2002 showed that mobility in both inner and outer London was higher than elsewhere. Schools in inner London authorities had an average of 14.2 per cent. of pupils joining or leaving mid year. In Outer London the average was 6.8 per cent.. This compared to 5.9 per cent. for metropolitan authorities, 6.3 per cent. for unitary authorities and 5.7 per cent. for shire authorities. Ofsted evidence suggests that where mobility levels exceed 12 per cent. there is an impact on standards achieved for all pupils. We are seeking to address the issue of pupil mobility in London through the trialling of induction mentors in 22 London secondary schools, and by the dissemination of good practice through the Key Stage 3 Strategy.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether good practice guidelines on pupil mobility have been issued. [163421]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Guidance on Managing Pupil Mobility and the accompanying Handbook for Induction Mentors were launched on 26 November 2003. Copies are available from Prolog, from the Standards website at www.standards.dfes.gsi.gov.uk/schoolimprovement. Copies have also been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Rewarding and Developing Staff Initiative

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of the Government's Rewarding and Developing Staff funding has been spent on *(a)* additional staff, *(b)* external consultants, *(c)* general salary increases, *(d)* individual salary increases and *(e)* performance related pay. [162064]

Alan Johnson: The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) undertook an early evaluation of the Rewarding and Developing Staff initiative in its first year (2001–02). The evaluation findings did not provide information at the level of detail requested in the question, but did show investment by higher education institutions in the six areas prioritised by the scheme, as shown below.

Priority area	*Proportion of first year's investment*
Staff development (esp. management development)	30%
Recruitment and retention	30%
Reviews of staffing needs	12%
Job evaluation/equal pay	9%
Equal opportunities activities (excl. job evaluation/equal pay)	9%
Annual performance reviews	7%
Managing poor performance	3%

HEFCE will be evaluating the full first three years of the RDS initiative from autumn 2004.

Schools (West Suffolk)

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the schools in west Suffolk which ran a budget deficit in the year ended 31 March 2003; and how much this deficit was for each school. [163034]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is submitted to the Department according to local education authority areas rather than districts within an area. West Suffolk is a district of Suffolk Local Education Authority. The information for Suffolk is as follows:

Schools which ran a deficit budget in the year ending 31 March 2003.

£

School name	*Deficit*
Claydon High School	88,658
Hartismere High School	73,826
Stowmarket High School	43,747
Bury St. Edmunds County Upper School	34,990
Westbourne High School	34,789
St. Felix C of E VC Middle School	26,051
Beacon Hill School	25,466
Glemsford Community Primary School	4,961
Hundon Community Primary School	4,592
Clifford Road Primary School	2,017
Downing Primary School	142

Notes:

1. The data are as reported by Suffolk LEA as at 18 March 2004 and taken from their 2002–03 Section 52 Outturn Statement submitted to the DfES.
2. 2002–03 data remain provisional and as such are subject to change by the LEA.
3. Deficit budget is taken from Table B column 13—other revenue balance. This includes the cumulative balance of income less expenditure from revenue funding sources during the financial year and the balance from previous years.
4. Figures are rounded to the nearest pound.

Teacher/Lecturer Salaries

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has for the level of *(a)* teacher and *(b)* lecturer salaries, in real terms, in each of the next three years. [162673]

Mr. Miliband: My right hon. Friend has accepted the School Teachers' Review Body's recommendation that pay scales increase by 2.5 per cent. in April 2004 and by 3.25 per cent. in April 2005 to August 2006. This is in line with the Government's projections on the rate of inflation to 2006 and it is not, therefore, expected that teachers' pay will involve a real terms increase.

The Government play no part in setting the levels of pay in the higher education and further education sectors as universities and further education colleges are independent and autonomous bodies. Pay levels are subject to negotiations between employers and the representative trade union bodies. Pay levels will therefore vary from institution to institution.

Teachers' Pensions

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent representations he has received regarding teachers' pensions; and if he will make a statement. [162872]

Mr. Miliband: Officials in the Department are working closely with representatives of teacher and employer associations on a wide-ranging review of the Teachers' Pension Scheme that will look at what improvements and flexibilities could be introduced as part of a package of changes that will include an increase to 65 in the scheme's normal pension age.

I have proposed that the higher pension age would be introduced for new teachers from 2006 and for the future service of existing teachers from 2013. I have also given the following assurances to teachers:

Current members of the scheme who reach age 60 on or before 31 August 2013 will not be affected by changes to the existing pension arrangements.

Pension benefits earned before the new arrangements start will be fully protected.

Teachers will still be able to retire at, before or after age sixty as they do now. At retirement, pension and lump sum benefits will take account of the number of years of service the teacher has worked before and after the changes.

Teachers, their union representatives and employers will be fully consulted on the changes.

The review will also examine what other benefits and flexibilities can be introduced into the pension scheme.

NORTHERN IRELAND

A-levels

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what methods are being employed to ensure that the percentage of pupils achieving at least three A grades at A-level in Northern Ireland is maintained. [160625]

Jane Kennedy: The standards of attainment of pupils of all abilities, including the most able, are maintained in all schools through teachers' professional development, and evaluated through inspection.

Costello Report

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which external consultants the Department of Education employed in the development, distribution and promotion of the Costello Report. [160984]

Jane Kennedy: No external consultants were employed by my Department in the development, distribution and promotion of the Post-Primary Review Working Group's report. A private company was contracted to print and distribute copies of the report to schools and other bodies.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what amount was spent on *(a)* printing the Costello Report and *(b)* the design, printing and distribution of the leaflet, Information about Transfer Tests and New Post-Primary Arrangements. [160985]

Jane Kennedy: The cost of printing the Costello Report was £25,000 and the cost of the design, printing and distribution of the household leaflet was £134,000.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list *(a)* the groups and individuals he has met and *(b)* the groups and individuals that have requested a meeting with him to discuss post-primary arrangements, since the publication of the Costello Report. [160986]

Jane Kennedy: Since the publication of the Costello Report, I met with representatives of the UUP, DUP, SDLP, Sinn Fein, the Alliance Party and the Governing Bodies Association. I have received a request for a meeting with representatives of the Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland and I hope to meet with them in the very near future.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when guidance will be issued to schools about the management, planning arrangements and timetable outlined in the Implementation Process Timetable in the Costello Group Report. [160989]

Jane Kennedy: Schools will be kept informed about the implementation arrangements as they are developed. Advice about the initial stages of implementation is expected to be issued to schools before the end of the current school year.

Easter Uprising

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his policy is regarding returning original documents held by his office from the Easter uprising in Dublin in 1916 to *(a)* the nearest living relative and *(b)* the National Archives of Ireland. [162316]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Northern Ireland Office holds no such records on the Easter uprising in Dublin in 1916. Public release of records by the Northern Ireland Office is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Public Records Legislation.

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reason his Office retained original documents on the Easter uprising in Dublin in 1916. [162319]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Northern Ireland Office has not retained any original documents on the Easter uprising in Dublin in 1916.

Energy Costs

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funds he will make available to help reduce energy costs in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [162669]

Mr. Pearson: The 2003 Budget included a proposal to remove some of the excess costs inherited from privatisation and reduce electricity bills for Northern Ireland businesses by some £30 million per year. I hope that the result of this will be an average decrease in electricity prices across the business sector of 10 per cent. below the levels they would otherwise have been, taking effect from later this year.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment officials are continuing to work with The Northern Ireland Authority for Energy Regulation and Northern Ireland Electricity on the development of this proposed intervention. They are also working with the Department of Trade and Industry on the need to secure EU State Aid approval.

In addition I am, as part of the new strategic energy framework for Northern Ireland, considering other means of addressing the high energy costs here, including actions that can be taken to improve energy efficiency.

Fisheries

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what financial assistance is provided to fishermen in *(a)* Portavogie, *(b)* Ardglass and *(c)* Kilkeel who are involved in a tie-up-scheme to assist the Cod Recovery Programme; and if he will make a statement. [162918]

Mr. Pearson: A transitional aid scheme has been drawn up in consultation with the local industry and is currently under consideration by the European Commission.

My officials are pressing the Commission for their approval to detailed scheme proposals. Only when all essential approvals have been secured and the scheme has been launched will the figures of compensation paid to vessel owners by port be available.

Pay Dispute (Universities)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement regarding the pay dispute at universities in Northern Ireland. [162695]

Jane Kennedy: The Association of University Teachers (AUT) is taking industrial action in support of its pay claim. University staff pay is determined by central UK-wide negotiating machinery in which Government are not involved.

The Department for Employment and Learning provides funding towards the recurrent costs of the universities but is not the employer of AUT members and has no locus in the determination of their pay. They are directly employed by the universities, which are autonomous bodies responsible for setting their own salary levels.

Planning and Development

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how much the establishment of the area planning and development partnerships is expected to cost; and what budget will be allocated to the area planning and development partnerships in each Education and Library Board area; [160987]

(2) how much the establishment of the Strategic Planning and Implementation Group is expected to cost; and what budget will be allocated to it. [160988]

Jane Kennedy: The arrangements for the establishment of the Strategic Planning and Implementation Group and the Area Planning and Development Partnerships are under consideration. The purpose of these groups is to

provide a forum for key interests to work together. Costs have not yet been determined but are expected to be modest.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what steps have been taken to establish strategic planning and implementation groups; [160991]

(2) what steps have been taken *(a)* to establish area and development partnerships and *(b)* to appoint area planning and development partnership staff. [160992]

Jane Kennedy: The membership and functions of the Strategic Planning and Implementation Group are currently under consideration and I expect the Group to be established shortly. The Department of Education will take advice from the Group about the functions of Area Planning and Development Partnerships before they are established.

School Lockers

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of schools in Northern Ireland provide full locker facilities for all pupils attending school. [161291]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Seamus Ludlow

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on what date the Director of Public Prosecutions received papers prepared by the Chief Constable arising from his investigation into the murder of Mr. Seamus Ludlow; and what actions have been taken in respect of prosecutions in this case. [161219]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland received the police investigation file in relation to the death of Seamus Ludlow on 23 October 1998.

On 15 October 1999 the direction for no prosecution was issued.

Southern Education and Library Board

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when annual funding to the Southern Education and Library Board will be made available; and if he will make a statement. [160333]

Jane Kennedy: I am pleased to say that all Education and Library Boards have now received details of their financial allocations for the 2004–05 financial year. These allocations reflect the Government's focus on improving the quality of service delivery in primary and post-primary education linked to a quality youth service.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people have so far been recruited to *(a)* the armed forces and *(b)* the police force in Afghanistan; how many of these recruits to the Afghan armed forces and police force have been retained (i) during the training and (ii) after the training has been completed; and how he intends to improve the retention of new recruits to the Afghan armed forces and police force. [162939]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: A total of 13.656 personnel have so far been recruited to the Afghan National Army (ANA). 8,912 have completed training and are now serving with deployed units, 1,589 are currently in training and a further 1,240 are at the initial processing stage. A total of 20,000 personnel have been or are being trained for the Afghan National Police (ANP) force. We do not have exact figures for retention in the ANP but overall retention rates appear better than in the ANA. Both army and police training are being accelerated following a recent significant increase in resources from the US.

International assistance for Afghanistan on army and police training is led by the US and Germany respectively. The UK has provided substantial assistance in both fields, elements of which should directly support retention. Support for ANA development has included £830,000 for refurbishment of ANA barracks to provide decent living and working conditions. We are in the process of providing a further £10 million to develop ANA recruitment centres. The UK provided basic assistance to the ANP to help ensure the retention of national police deployed in Mazar-e Sharif (where our Provincial Reconstruction Team is located). In addition, the UK has provided nearly £1 million of support to German-led refurbishment of the Afghan Border Police Headquarters in Kabul.

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what policies are in place to prevent violence targeted against humanitarian aid workers in Afghanistan. [162968]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Officials from the FCO, DfID and the MoD regularly meet representatives of the British Afghanistan Agencies Group to discuss a range of issues including security.

We and our international partners are committed to helping the Afghan Government improve the security situation in Afghanistan. In October 2003, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force beyond Kabul. Work is in hand to expand the network of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) deployed across Afghanistan, including in the south and south-east. PRTs aim to support the authority of the Afghan Government, improve the security situation, facilitate development and reconstruction and support Security Sector Reform. In the long-term Afghanistan must have an effective national army and police force. Work to recruit and train them has been under way for some time, with our active support and involvement. A wider programme of Security Sector Reform is also underway, including the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants.

Cyprus

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* a

unity settlement and *(b)* an end to the occupation of Cyprus by Turkish armed forces is a prerequisite to advancing Turkey's EU candidacy status; and if he will make a statement. [163245]

Mr. MacShane: A Cyprus settlement is not a precondition for the opening of EU accession negotiations with Turkey. The UK is working to ensure a positive outcome in the ongoing settlement negotiations, including on security issues, on the basis of the UN Secretary General's proposals. We believe that is also the position of the Turkish Government—something which can only strengthen Turkey's relationship with the European Union.

Iran

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in persuading Iran to allow full International Atomic Energy Agency access to its nuclear facilities since he took part in the tripartite visit to Iran in 2003. [162396]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* Together with our tripartite partners, we have continued to press Iran to meet all of its obligations under the agreement signed in Tehran last October. Following informal discussions in the margins of last week's meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and further high-level contacts in Tehran, Iran has now reversed its recent decision to suspend co-operation with IAEA inspectors. It is hoped that the inspectors will now gain full access to Iranian facilities.

Lancaster House

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the running cost of Lancaster House was in the last year for which figures are available. [163017]

Mr. Straw: In the financial year 2002–03 the running cost of Lancaster House was £1,882,000.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost of *(a)* maintaining and *(b)* holding publicly funded functions at Lancaster House was in each of the last five years. [163018]

Mr. Straw: To provide the cost of holding publicly funded functions at Lancaster House for the last five years would incur disproportionate costs. However the cost of maintaining Lancaster House is as follows:

	£
1999	161,904
2000	375,679
2001	746,222
2002	325,632
2003	608,547

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times Lancaster House was used for private functions in each of the last five years; and what revenue was brought in as a result. [163019]

Mr. Straw: No private functions are held in Lancaster House. However occasionally, on special request, the Crown Estate has allowed Lancaster House to be used for commercial filming. The revenue from this source over the last five years has been set out in the following table:

	£
1999	26,000
2000	0
2001	40,000
2002	95,000
2003	7,000

We are actively exploring the possibility of greater commercial use of the House in order to offset costs.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times Lancaster House was used by his Department for functions in each of the last five years. [163020]

Mr. Straw: In 2002 Lancaster House was used by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office 236 times and in 2003, 216 times. We are unable to provide figures for previous years as this would incur disproportionate costs.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's policy is on private hire of Lancaster House. [163021]

Mr. Straw: The lease for Lancaster House with the Crown Estate only permits its use by senior Civil Servants of grades 2 and above for official business. However on special request, the Crown Estate have on occasion allowed commercial filming to take place.

We are actively exploring the possibility of greater commercial use of the House in order to offset costs.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Magistrates Courts

Bob Spink: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans he has to review the ease of access to magistrates courts for rural communities. [162877]

Mr. Leslie: I currently have no plans to review access to magistrates courts in rural communities. Decisions regarding the location of magistrates courts whether rural or urban are made by local Magistrates' Courts Committee's (MCCs) pursuant to Section 31 of the Justices of the Peace Act 1997.

From April 2005 a single executive agency will be created to administer the magistrates courts, the Crown court and the county courts in England and Wales. The new agency can further improve the way all the courts

work, by allowing the different parts of the system to work together more effectively to respond to local needs, including those of rural communities.

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was spent by *(a)* the Government and *(b)* the private sector on (i) solely state financed and (ii) public-private and private finance initiative projects in the Department in each of the last 10 years, broken down by region. [160857]

Mr. Leslie: The following table shows how much the DCA has spent on (i) solely state financed and (ii) public-private and private finance initiative projects in each of the last 10 years. The figures for the solely state-financed projects are for property and construction projects only. The figures for the public-private and private finance initiative projects include IT and property and construction projects.

An indication of the amount the private sector has spent on public-private and private finance initiative projects in the Department in each of the last 10 years can be found on the Treasury website at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public_private_partnerships/ppp_pfi_stats.cfm

	Solely state financed (£ million)	*Region*	*Public-private and private finance initiative projects (£ million)*	*Region*
1994–95	33.75	Wales and Chester	0	
	6.3	South East	0	
1995–96	32.7	South East	0	
1996–97	0		0	
1997–98	0		9.5	National
1998–99	0		19.5	
1999–2000	18.7	West	28.8	
2000–01	0		53.6	
2001–02	0		1.3	Midlands
			75	National
2002–03	0		1.4	Midlands
			99.7	National
2003–04 (expected)	0		1.5	Midlands
			107.7	National

Supreme Court

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs which consultees expressed concerns as to the integrity of Scots law further to the proposals for a new UK Supreme Court. [162327]

Mr. Leslie: The Government published a summary of responses in January 2004. They have also published the full responses given by consultees on the Department for Constitutional Affairs website.

There was no specific question on Scots Law. Only James Chalmers, a lecturer at Aberdeen university, and two members of the public suggested that the proposals would have an adverse effect on the integrity of Scots law.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Bills (Timetabling)

Mr. Shepherd: To ask the Leader of the House if he will list for each bill introduced in *(a)* Session 2001–02 and *(b)* Session 2002–03 (i) the number of sittings in committees, (ii) the number of knives (A) for which provision was made and (B) which took effect, (iii) the number of groups of amendments not reached because a knife took effect, (iv) the number of clauses on which the question that the clause stand part was not reached because a knife took effect, (v) for how many days each bill was considered at report stage, (vi) the number of knives (X) for which provision was made and (Y) which took effect at report stage, (vii) the number of groups of amendments not reached because a knife took effect and (viii) how long was spent in debate (1) at second reading, (2) in committee, (3) in consideration on report and (4) on third reading. [162841]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 23 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 662W. In respect of 2002–03, much of this information is published in the First Report of the Modernisation Committee, Session 2002–03 (HC 1222, p Ev3). Further information has been published by the Procedure Committee in its Minutes of Evidence of 11 February 2004 (HC 325-i, available on the Committee's web pages).

Petitions

Bob Spink: To ask the Leader of the House if he will make it Government policy to ensure that *(a)* all petitions presented in the House are responded to by Government departments within five days and *(b)* where the petition requires a response from another body, it is responded to within 10 days. [162910]

Mr. Woolas: No. I believe that five days would be an unrealistic deadline for Government Departments to respond to petitions, and, if imposed, would lead to less helpful observations. In some cases, it may not be appropriate for the Government to respond to a petition at all. However, the Modernisation Committee is examining the handling of petitions as part of its inquiry into Connecting with the Public and my right hon. Friend is willing to contemplate change.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Aggregates (Removal)

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what environmental criteria he requires to be met before authorising the removal of aggregates from the sea bed. [162901]

Keith Hill: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister gives careful and detailed consideration to all marine minerals dredging proposals and will only approve them once fully satisfied that there will be no significant harm to the marine environment and no harm to the coastline. A Coastal Impact Study must be produced for each proposal. All applications are subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and must be accompanied by an Environmental Statement. Each

application is subject to wide publicity and consultation with, among others, the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), DEFRA's Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquatic Science (CEFAS), the Environment Agency and English Nature.

Council Housing

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 18 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 447–48W, on council housing, whether the local authorities listed in the table chose the large scale voluntary transfer option; and if he will list the local authorities who chose the *(a)* Arms Length Management Organisation and *(b)* private finance initiative option whose tenants rejected these options. [163683]

Keith Hill: Five local authorities that had unsuccessful transfer ballots later had successful transfer ballots and have transferred their housing stock to a registered social landlord. These local authorities are:

Torbay

Mendip

Mid Bedfordshire

Maidstone

Cherwell

Camden is the only local authority that recommended an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) to its tenants and secured a place on the ALMO programme, which subsequently had its recommendation rejected by tenants.

Camden is also the only local authority where tenants have rejected a Private Finance Initiative Bid.

Council Tax

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the maximum council tax is that a local authority may set for *(a)* a second home and *(b)* an empty home; and to what purposes the local authority may apply the proceeds of the council tax received in each case. [162220]

Mr. Raynsford: From 1 April 2004, the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings)(England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/3011) allow local billing authorities to reduce the discount on most second homes to 10 per cent. and on long-term empty homes to zero. There is a national exemption from council tax for unfurnished dwellings which are vacant for six months or less. The maximum council tax which could be charged on a second home is therefore 90 per cent. and the maximum council tax which could be charged on a long-term empty home is 100 per cent. Council tax from second homes and empty homes can be used in the same way as council tax from other property. The proceeds are shared, between billing and precepting authorities. The effect of changing the discounts on second and long-term empty homes is to raise the tax base of an area and so local authorities in that area can raise more council tax. The Government will not adjust grant because of the extra income generated by reducing the second homes discount. This means local authorities in the area have the choice to spend this on local priorities or to have a lower council tax or precept than would otherwise have been the case. In the case of long-term empty property, the Government intend to adjust grant so that extra revenue will not be retained locally.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Prosser: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to *(a)* change staffing levels and *(b)* encourage (i) voluntary retirement and (ii) voluntary redundancies in the Department. [161476]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is reviewing its staffing resources as part of its business planning process and in the light of recommendations in the Lyons Review and the work currently under way in relation to the Gershon Efficiency Review. There is no current programme to encourage voluntary retirement or voluntary redundancies in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Housing

Mr. Reed: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will estimate the revenue lost to Charnwood borough council in 2003–04 through exemption for council tax of houses of multiple occupation occupied solely by students. [162016]

Keith Hill: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 17 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 379W. The council tax revenue lost to Charnwood borough council through exemption for council tax of houses of multiple occupation occupied solely by students is compensated by Charnwood borough council receiving an equivalent amount of additional Revenue Support Grant before floors and ceilings.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how undertakings by local authorities to rehouse *(a)* released prisoners and *(b)* members of the forces released from service, together with their families, are maintained when councils transfer their housing stock to registered social landlords. [162766]

Keith Hill: After transfer local housing authorities retain their statutory functions in relation to homelessness and the allocation of housing. The Housing Allocation, Homelessness and Stock Transfer—A Guide to Key Issues issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in January 2004 advises that it is crucial for housing authorities to negotiate nomination agreements with the transfer landlord and other partner RSLs to ensure that they can continue to discharge their statutory responsibilities.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what central Government spending was allocated since 1999, and to which authorities, to *(a)* paying off housing debt after large scale voluntary transfer, *(b)* grants and payments to Arms Length Management Organisations and *(c)* contributions to the cost of (i) fees, (ii) consultancies and (iii) information campaigns in ballots for transfer which had a (A) successful and (B) unsuccessful outcomes. [162769]

Keith Hill: Since 1999 there have been 10 large scale voluntary transfers where the receipt was insufficient and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister made an overhanging debt payment. The payments are tabled as follows.

Financial year	Local authority	£ million
1999–2000	Burnley	21.0
2001–02	Coventry	111.7
2001–02	Calderdale	64.6
2001–02	Blackburn with Darwen	78.9
2002–03	St. Helens	87.2
2002–03	Redcar and Cleveland	25.4
2002–03	Knowsley	126.1
2002–03	Carlisle	18.0
2002–03	Bradford	182.8
2002–03	Walsall	108.7

The following allocations have been made to local authorities setting up Arms Length Management Organisations under Rounds 1–3 of the programme:

Round 1 ALMOs	Allocation 2002–04 (£ million)
Ashfield*	24.0
Derby*	31.1
Hounslow*	35.0
Kirklees*	62.5
Rochdale*	24.2
Stockton-on-Tees*	44.5
Westminster*	20.3
Wigan*	58.3

Round 2 ALMOs	Allocation 2003–05 (£ million)
Barnsley*	48.2
Blyth Valley*	17.5
Bolton*	53.0
Brent*	33.8
Carrick*	7.2
Cheltenham*	15.0
Colchester	13.5
Hillingdon*	16.6
Kensington and Chelsea*	21.7
Leeds East	14.7
Leeds North East*	10.5
Leeds North West	16.1
Leeds South East	10.4
Leeds South	22.6
Leeds West*	18.3
Oldham*	36.0
Salford	53.5
Waltham Forest	28.2

Round 3 ALMOs	Allocation 2004–06 (£ million)
Barnet	19.0
Camden	45.0
Easington	23.6
Gateshead	63.0
Harrow	5.0
High Peak	4.7
Islington	24.9
Newcastle	64.0
Poole	17.4
Sheffield (partial)	49.7
Solihull	21.0
South Lakeland	4.2
Warrington	18.3

All allocations are conditional on the local authority receiving approval to delegate its housing management functions to the ALMO under section 27 of the Housing Act 1985 and the ALMO receiving at least a two star rating from the Housing Inspectorate. Those marked * have fulfilled these two conditions and funding has therefore been confirmed. Salford and Camden have since withdrawn from the ALMO programme.

Expenditure incurred in carrying out the statutory consultation required under section 106A of the Housing Act 1985, including the cost of any ballot, is considered to be in connection with the management of dwellings held within the Housing Management Account and therefore must be charged to that account.

No payment is made by central Government towards the cost of such consultation and figures for the total expenditure on this, including the cost of fees, consultants and information campaigns by local authorities, are not held centrally.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what steps he has taken to consult council tenants about the Fourth Option of allowing councils to retain and improve their council house stock; [162931]

(2) what consultations he has held with *(a)* councils and *(b)* the Local Government Association about the Fourth Option of allowing councils to retain and improve their council housing stock. [162933]

Keith Hill: There has been no need for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to consult with individual council tenants or local government associations about local authority stock retention. All local authorities are aware that they can retain their housing stock if they can meet the decent homes standard through existing funding streams.

Local Government Grants

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the effective grant increase to Harrogate borough council is in financial year 2004–05. [163040]

Mr. Raynsford: Harrogate borough council received a formula grant increase of £249,000 (3 per cent.) compared to the 2003–04 formula grant after adjusting for changes in funding and function i.e. on a like-for-like basis.

London Electorate

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to ensure that the London electorate is able to understand *(a)* the range of elections in June and *(b)* the different voting system they will have to use. [163378]

Keith Hill: Responsibility for promoting voter understanding in the June elections to the Greater London Authority and European Parliament rests with the Electoral Commission under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The Greater London Returning Officer has overall responsibility for organising and running the GLA elections and, in 2004, the European Parliament elections in the London region. I understand that the Electoral Commission and Greater London Returning Officer are working in partnership on a programme of public information and awareness.

The Government have made provision for the Greater London Returning Officer to include information about the GLA and European Parliamentary elections in the

booklet of election addresses by the Mayoral candidates, which the Greater London Returning Officer compiles and which will be delivered to each elector. The election rules also require the Greater London Returning Officer to provide notices for the guidance of voters which must be displayed at polling stations and for similar information to be sent to postal voters.

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he last met members or officials of the Electoral Commission; what the purpose of that meeting was; and what the outcome was. [161002]

Phil Hope: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister met with members of the Electoral Commission on 3 March to discuss issues relating to the piloting of all-postal voting at the European Parliamentary and combined local elections in June, including how many regions should be involved. Both parties agreed that the regions that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced should use all-postal voting this year are each capable of running a successful pilot.

Regional Bodies

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the locations of the offices of regional bodies and agencies for which his Department is responsible, broken down by county. [162576]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for no regional bodies. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for the Government Offices for the Regions (GOs). The GOs are part of central Government and not regional bodies in their own right.

Supporting People Initiative

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will review the proposed cuts in the Supporting People allocations for 2004–05 with a view to protecting from those cuts local authorities with low per head of population allocations; [159932]

(2) if he will reverse the proposed cuts in the Supporting People allocations for 2004–05 in respect of individual local authorities, with particular reference to Staffordshire. [159875]

Yvette Cooper: Following the late sharp increase in the size of the Supporting People budget last year the Government launched an Independent Review into the Supporting People programme. The review concluded that £1.8 billion was too much to pay for legacy funding, however it recommended that the pace of change needed to take account of the need to protect services for vulnerable people. This is why authorities have only been required to make a 2.5 per cent. efficiency saving in 2004–05 with an element of these funds being re-allocated elsewhere on the programme. The final Supporting People grant allocations for 2004–05 have now been made and will not be reverted. Those allocations reflect a very significant increase in funding compared to two years ago.

Decisions about longer-term future allocations are still under consideration, but we are looking at the wide variation in provision and circumstances between authorities. The intention has always been to move towards a needs based allocation formula, the Independent Review has made recommendations on the formula and we are looking at these recommendations in detail.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the written statement of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 84WS, on Supporting People Programme 2004–05, whether reductions in funding allocation for the Supporting People Programme 2005–06 will only apply to local authorities with high unit costs. [160774]

Yvette Cooper: Future funding for Supporting People is being considered as part of the Spending Review 2004. Additionally an accelerated inspection programme will look at 19 high cost authorities to help address this issue.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will announce funding allocations for the Supporting People Programme 2005–06. [160775]

Yvette Cooper: The Supporting People funding allocations for 2005–06 for England will be announced by November 2004.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the future funding of the Supporting People Programme for *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 in (i) the North West and (ii) Lancashire. [161350]

Yvette Cooper: The Supporting People Programme Grant Allocations for England for 2004–05 were announced on 12 February 2004. Future years funding for the programme is being considered as part of the Spending Review 2004.

HEALTH

Agency Staff

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost of agency spending on staff other than doctors and nurses in the NHS in *(a)* England and *(b)* each strategic health authority for each year since 1997, broken down by category of staff. [144782]

Mr. Hutton: The National Health Service does not separately record the cost of employing agency staff. The following figures include total cost to the NHS of staff (excluding doctors and nurses) not directly employed by NHS bodies.

The table shows all non-National Health Service staff expenditure incurred by health authorities, NHS trusts and primary care trusts in England, broken down by staff category, excluding non-NHS doctors and non-NHS nurses. Details of expenditure in each health authority area for the years in question have been placed in the Library.

Expenditure on non NHS staff (excluding doctors and nurses—England)

£

Staff Category (by NHS classification)	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Dental Staff	1,332,649	933,032	764,933	3,131,477	4,405,459	5,117,828
Scientific, Therapeutic and Technical Staff	69,770,807	93,972,343	111,556,549	148,760,849	195,072,433	233,304,815
Administrative and Clerical Staff	59,577,521	72,006,752	89,992,230	117,545,163	153,690,347	172,345,658
Maintenance and Works Staff	3,240,005	4,195,167	4,370,933	5,089,984	5,770,689	6,668,042
Ambulance Staff	197,276	92,964	173,807	620,184	207,693	655,253
Healthcare Assistants and Other Support Staff	26,791,401	30,398,979	34,113,979	38,497,530	44,929,553	58,713,051
Other Employees	15,535,029	18,206,059	21,326,417	24,896,308	32,897,809	77,766,180
England Total	176,444,688	219,805,296	262,298.848	338,541,495	436,973,983	554,570,827

Note:
1. Annual Financial Returns of Health Authorities, 1997–98 to 2001–02
2. Annual Financial Returns of Strategic Health Authorities, 2002–03
3. Annual Financial Returns of NHS Trusts, 1997–98 to 2002–03
4. Annual Financial Returns of Primary Care Trusts, 2000–01 to 2002–03

The separate figures not included in the table for doctors and nurses include all medical staff and all nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff. All data for 2002–03 are provisional

Biomedical Sciences

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the current role of the Workforce Development Confederation of the NHS is in providing training and support for biomedical sciences for the NHS. [161029]

Mr. Hutton: Workforce development confederations are responsible for developing the existing and future workforce of the National Health Service, including those working in biomedical sciences. This includes assessment of the right number of staff and strategies to ensure that they are in place, including support for training and recruitment and retention initiatives.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England funds the majority of undergraduates in biomedical sciences. The NHS multi-professional education and training budget funds the year in service leading to state registration.

Care Homes

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his policy is on the differentials between rates paid by local authorities for residents in local authority care homes and those paid for residents in private care homes in the same local authority area. [163041]

Dr. Ladyman: Where council-run services are more expensive than those provided by the independent sector, councils need to demonstrate through best value reviews that those higher costs are justified.

Clinical Staff Numbers

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses there were per head of population in each year since 1997; [160474]

(2) how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses were practising per 1,000 population in each year since 1997. [160482]

Mr. Hutton: The table shows the number of doctors and nurses per 100,000 population in each year since 1997.

The standard ratio used in the Department is per 100,000 population.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS) Staff[1] and General Medical Practitioners (excluding retainers)[2] and all NHS qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff, including Practice Nurses employed by Unrestricted Principals and Equivalents (UPEs)[3], per 100,000 of population

England *numbers (headcount)*

	1997	*1998*[4]	*1999*[4]	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Population	48,635,908	48,789,240	48,986,999	49,166,627	49,389,736	49,561,751
All Doctors[1] (excluding retainers)	89,619	91,837	93,981	96,319	99,169	103,350
Per 100,000 population	184.3	188.2	191.8	195.9	200.8	208.5
of which:						
HCHS Staff[1]	60,230	62,140	63,994	66,067	68,484	72,168
Per 100,000 population	123.8	127.4	130.6	134.4	138.7	145.6
General Medical Practitoners (excluding retainers)	29,389	29,697	29,987	30,252	30,685	31,182
Per 100,000 population	60	61	61	62	62	63
Nurses	318,856	323,457	329,637	335,952	350,381	367,520
Per 100,000 population	655.6	663.0	672.9	683.3	709.4	741.5

[1] Excludes Hospital Medical Hospital Practitioners and Hospital Medical Clinical Assistants, most of whom are GPs working part-time in hospitals
[2] All Practitioners (excluding GP Retainers) includes UPEs, Restricted Principals, Assistants, GP Registrars, Salaried Doctors (Para 52 SFA) and PMS Other.
[3] UPEs include QMS Unrestricted Principals, PMS Contracted GPs and PMS Salaried GPs
[4] Practice nurse headcount figures are estimated for 1998 and 1999.
Practice nurse figures are as at 1 October for 1997–99.
All data as at 30 September each year except GP and Practice nurses as at 1 October 1997–99
Source:
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics Department of Health Medical and Dental Workforce Census 2001 ONS Population Census

Committee on Safety of Medicines

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when the Committee on Safety of Medicines was first informed of the risk of stroke in certain atypical antipsychotics used for the treatment of elderly people with dementia; [161249]

(2) what arrangements his Department has for sharing information between the Committee on Safety of Medicines and similar organisations in other countries on the safety of medicines used internationally; [161250]

(3) what representations he received on the risk of stroke with antipsychotics before the announcement of 9 March 2004 on the treatment of people with dementia; [161251]

(4) what facilities the Committee on Safety of Medicines has for basing its decisions on medicines used in the UK on clinical trials held in other countries. [161252]

Dr. Ladyman: The safety of medicines is continually monitored by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), with expert advice from the Government's independent expert advisory committee, the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM).

Early information on the risk of stroke in dementia patients treated with risperidone was assessed by the MHRA in 2002, resulting in changes to the product information to include appropriate warnings. However, it was not until later in 2003, when further data became available, that revealed the magnitude of the risk and potential public health implications. The CSM was consulted in December 2003, as soon as all the data and subsequent analyses had been compiled and assessed by the MHRA. The CSM considered an assessment of all available data from clinical trials with risperidone and advised that additional analyses of the risperidone clinical trials in dementia and analysis of the risk of alternative treatments were required, as well as expert advice in the treatment of patients with dementia.

An expert working group, including geriatricians, psychogeriatricians and psychiatrists, met on 19 January 2004 to consider a formal meta-analysis of clinical trial data for risperidone and clinical trial data on olanzapine, which had recently become available. The CSM considered the recommendations of the expert working group at the end of January and advised that the risks of stroke with risperidone and olanzapine should be communicated accompanied by comprehensive treatment guidelines to inform the necessary changes in prescribing practice. In the case of a third atypical antipsychotic quetiapine, there were insufficient data to draw conclusions.

Risperidone has a United Kingdom marketing authorisation, whereas olanzapine has a European authorisation valid throughout the European Community. The communication in the UK on 9 March 2004 on risperidone and olanzapine was planned to coincide with a Europe-wide communication on olanzapine following consideration by the European scientific committee, the Committee for Proprietary Medicinal Products (CPMP) at its February meeting.

The CSM, through the MHRA, has close links with regulatory authorities world-wide. The MHRA is represented on the CPMP and its Pharmacovigilance Working Party (PhVWP), which meet monthly and provide a regular forum for discussion of drug safety issues within the European Union. An electronic communication system allows rapid exchange of drug safety information between member states. The PhVWP has regular videoconferences to share drug safety information with the Food and Drug Administration in the United States of America. The MHRA is a member of the Vigimed mailing list, which is an e-mail distribution list set up to facilitate rapid exchange of information between National Centres participating in the World Health Organisation International Drug Monitoring Programme. The MHRA also has informal links with other regulatory authorities world-wide.

There is an obligation on companies making an application for a marketing authorisation to provide the MHRA with all information relevant to the assessment of risks and benefits on the product at the time of the application; this includes data from clinical trials conducted outside the UK. For marketed drugs, the marketing authorisation holder's "qualified person", who is responsible for their pharmacovigilance system, has an obligation to inform the MHRA of any information relevant to the evaluation of the risks and benefits of the product.

Aside from the data and interpretation received from the company, and their corresponding applications to vary the Marketing Authorisation, no representations were received on the risk of stroke with antipsychotics before the announcement of 9 March.

Community Care Act

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many local authorities had incurred fines following the introduction of the Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc) Act 2003, at the latest available date; how much the fines for each local authority have been since the Act came into force; what the total amount of fines incurred by local authorities is; and if he will make a statement. [162617]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* Figures for legal liability for delayed discharges for individual councils are not currently held centrally although data on the number of delays and the level of legal liabilities will be available in due course, once the data have been validated. However 17 councils have indicated that they have no liabilities for charges since reimbursement came into force. Further, the majority of social services departments have arranged local investment agreements with the national health service and will only pay charges once they exceed this locally agreed level of investment.

Continuing NHS Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the review of continuing NHS care in nine strategic health authorities, referred to by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Lord Warner on 10 March. [162188]

Dr. Ladyman: The independent review of the implementation of fully funded national health service continuing care in nine strategic health authorities is currently underway and is expected to be completed in the spring.

Delayed Discharges

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients' hospital discharge was delayed while awaiting community care packages in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in each of the last six years. [162384]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* Data on delayed discharges are not collected on the basis of awaiting community care services. All available information on delayed transfers of care since 1997 are available in the Library, including the latest figures for 2003–04, Quarter 3 (December 2003).

Dentistry

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the oral answer of the Minister of State on 24 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 133, on dentistry, when the hon. Member for Doncaster, Central (Ms Winterton) will write to the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam. [159809]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I wrote to the hon. Member on Tuesday 16 March 2004. A copy has been placed in the Library.

Drinking Water

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's policy is on the provision of drinking water in NHS hospitals for *(a)* staff and *(b)* patients; and if he will make a statement. [161355]

Mr. Hutton: Departmental policy is to provide staff and patients in the national health service with wholesome potable water as required by the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 1989. Most of the water supplied in the NHS is from mains supply. It is the responsibility of the relevant water company to deliver water of drinkable quality to the NHS site. NHS trusts are responsible for maintaining water quality within their buildings.

Care Eligibility Criteria

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what monitoring and assessment his Department will carry out of the current review that strategic health authorities are undertaking of their eligibility criteria and of individual cases by March, as referred to by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Lord Warner on 10 March. [162187]

Dr. Ladyman: There are no plans to evaluate the fully funded national health service continuing care eligibility criteria of each strategic health authority. It is the responsibility of each SHA to be satisfied that their criteria reflect existing guidance and the Coughlan judgment. The number of investigations completed and the number of cases granted recompense will be reviewed after the end of March deadline.

Energy Consumption

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made to date by NHS estates towards meeting his target of reducing energy consumption by 15 per cent. during this decade. [161200]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The national health service continues to make progress to meet this challenging target. Since the 1980s there has been a continuing downward trend in energy usage, carbon emissions are reducing and 68 per cent. of the existing NHS estate has already achieved the energy efficiency target.

NHS Estates is also working closely with Action Energy, NHS Purchasing and Supplies Agency (NHS PASA), and the Carbon Trust to support the NHS and provide best practice advice and guidance to improve energy efficiency.

Free Prescriptions

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations he has received on the categories of patients eligible for free prescriptions in England. [162231]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* Representations received since 1 January 2004 have been identified in respect of the following groups:

Medical Conditions:

Alopecia
Alzheimer's disease
Arthritis
Asthma
Autoimmune condition
Cancer
Chronic illness (unidentified)
Coeliac disease
Crohn's disease
Cystic Fibrosis
Downs Syndrome
Haemophilia
Heart condition
Hormone replacement treatment (male and female)
Hyperpituitarism
Hypertension
Incontinence
Kidney dialysis
Leg Ulcers, dressings
Lupus
M.E. (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome)
Mental Health (various)
Multiple sclerosis
Muscular Dystrophy
Parkinson's Disease
Pleurisy
Spleen removed
Ulcerative Colitis

Other circumstances:

Apprentices
Day Case Patients
Private Patients

Recipients of:

Carer's Allowance

Disability Living Allowance

Incapacity Benefit

Students

General Medical Council

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether proficiency in the use of the English language is a requirement for applicant doctors from the European Union seeking to register with the General Medical Council in order to work in the NHS. [162092]

Mr. Hutton: Doctors who are European Economic Area nationals do not have to undertake English language competency tests in order to register with the General Medical Council. The law does not currently permit this. It is the responsibility of national health service employers to ensure that all doctors they employ have the necessary English language competence to carry out their duties safely. They may require a doctor to undertake a language assessment as part of the recruitment process, regardless of which country they come from.

General Practitioners

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library a copy of the guidance to general practitioners on implementing the advanced access system; and if he will make a statement. [159781]

Mr. Hutton: A copy of "Improving access in primary care with Advanced Access" has been placed in the Library. This is produced by the primary care collaborative. A key role for the collaborative is to explain, promote and disseminate "Advanced Access". Participating general practices have delivered impressive results—delivering a 72 per cent, reduction in waits for a general practitioner and a 50 per cent, reduction in waits to see a nurse. In large part as a result of this work, most patients in most areas are now able to be offered fast access to a GP or other primary care professional, in line with the NHS Plan target.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what reimbursement is made available to GP practices meeting the *(a)* 48 and *(b)* 24 hour access targets. [159782]

Mr. Hutton: Under the new primary medical services contracts, a practice will, from 2005–06, be able to receive on average up to £11,000 annually for achieving and sustaining delivery of patient access to services in line with the NHS Plan target. Most patients in most areas are now offered this level of access and we are confident that these financial incentives will ensure that this level of access continues and improves further.

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners there are per head of population in each of the primary care trusts within the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority. [163032]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of general practitioners per head of population for each primary care trust within the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridge Strategic Health Authority area is shown in the table.

Unrestricted Principals and Equivalents[1] (UPEs) per 100,000 patients for Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority by Primary Care Trust as at 30 September 2003

Numbers (headcount)

	UPEs	*UPE patients*	*UPEs per 100,000 patients*
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	1,341	2,211,268	61
of which:			
Broadland	73	119,170	61
Cambridge City	87	137,350	63
Central Suffolk	63	95,586	66
East Cambridgeshire and Fenland	81	148,405	55
Great Yarmouth	47	89,627	52
Huntingdonshire	94	148,749	63
Ipswich	88	147,514	60
North Norfolk	60	100,541	60
North Peterborough	58	114,528	51
Norwich	91	129,677	70
South Cambridgeshire	64	104,440	61
South Peterborough	56	94,850	59
Southern Norfolk	114	198,741	57
Suffolk Coastal	63	97,544	65
Suffolk West	137	222,666	62
Waveney	76	124,716	61
West Norfolk	89	137,164	65

[1] UPEs include QMS Unrestricted Principals, PMS Contracted GPs and PMS Salaried GPs

Source:

Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics

Great Ormond Street Hospital

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints were received in the last two years, by Great Ormond Street Hospital regarding pay for junior doctors on rotation; how many junior doctors were involved in those complaints; how many of those complaints have been settled; what procedures are in place to enable junior doctors to force such complaints to be addressed; and what time limit is placed on the hospital in settling such complaints or appeals. [R][158546]

Mr. Hutton: I am advised by North Central London Strategic Health Authority that:

Great Ormond Street Hospital National Health Service Trust has received three formal grievances/complaints regarding junior doctors banding and pay protection.

12 junior doctors from Great Ormond Street Hospital were involved in those complaints.

One grievance/complaint involving eight doctors has been settled.

The procedures in place are as set out in the national guidance and the process is being handled through the North Central London action team.

This appeal process does not outline time-scales for completing the process (as in the case of the Employment Tribunal, the time-scale is influenced by the individual case). Great Ormond Street also has its own internal appeals process, which would be triggered if either party is unhappy with the views expressed by the action team on this matter.

Hand Hygiene Trial

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of the NHS hand hygiene trial launched in July 2003 was; and what the outcome was. [160605]

Mr. Hutton: The National Patient Safety Agency launched a 'clean your hands' pilot campaign in July 2003. It aims to develop solutions to improve hand hygiene compliance by national health service staff, by testing ideas at six pilot sites. It is estimated that about £600,000 would be required to launch a campaign and supply a toolkit to every acute sector ward in the NHS, which works out at a cost of less than £2,000 per trust. The annual cost to the NHS of healthcare acquired infections has been estimated to be about £1 billion.

The evaluation report will be available in April 2004, but preliminary findings show that it achieved its objectives in raising staff and patient awareness of the importance of hand hygiene and increasing hand hygiene compliance.

Health Services (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes have been made to NHS waiting list times in each of the last seven years for Chorley residents. [161593]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information most closely associated with place of residency is not collected on a constituency level, but at a health services commissioner level. Data are shown in the tables for the South Lancashire Health Authority for the period 1997 to 2002 and the Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust for 2003.

In-patient waiting list in months

	Name of commissioners	*Total*	*0–2*	*3–5*	*6–8*	*9–11*	*12–14*	*15–17*	*18 plus*
1996–97	South Lancashire HA	10,092	4,565	2,587	1,696	1,069	160	12	3
1997–98	South Lancashire HA	10,414	4,566	2,391	1,580	1,128	563	186	0
1998–99	South Lancashire HA	9,179	4,259	2,285	1,354	839	356	86	0
1999–2000	South Lancashire HA	8,604	4,251	2,042	1,260	715	270	66	0
2000–01	South Lancashire HA	8,283	4,401	1,979	1,041	559	208	95	0
2001–02	South Lancashire HA	8,047	4,317	1,997	1,090	544	99	0	0
2002–03	Chorley and South Ribble PCT	4,761	3,108	1,108	510	35	0	0	0

Source:
Department of Health QF01.

Out-patient waiting list in weeks

	Name	*13–25*	*26 plus*
1997–98	South Lancashire HA	2,200	629
1998–99	South Lancashire HA	2,790	1373
1999–2000	South Lancashire HA	2,135	507
2000–01	South Lancashire HA	1,823	374
2001–02	South Lancashire HA	1,676	1

Out-patient waiting list in weeks—Chorley and South Ribble PCT

2002–03	*Number*
13–17	363
17–21	108
21–26	0
26 plus	0

Source:
Department of Health QM08R.

Hepatitis C

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dependants will not receive compensation from the Hepatitis C Ex Gratia scheme as a result of the 29 August 2003 cut-off. [155537]

Miss Melanie Johnson: It is not possible to estimate accurately the number of dependants of people in England who were infected with hepatitis C as a result of National Health Service treatment with blood or blood products and who died of all causes before 29 August 2003.

However, the latest figures from the UK Haemophilia Centre Doctors Organisation indicate that a total of 212 people with haemophilia have died as a direct result of the effects of hepatitis C. The number of non-haemophiliacs who have died as a direct result of the effects of hepatitis C is not known.

Heroin Substitutes

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the efficacy of prescribing heroin substitutes. [162519]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* The DH clinical guidelines, published in 1999, lay out the principles of safe and responsible prescribing to drug misusers. The guidelines discuss a number of alternative opiate and non-opiate substitute drugs. The recommendations in the guidelines are based on an expert review of the evidence.

Building on that, the National Treatment Agency (NTA) has produced guidance on the drugs used for substitute prescribing. This guidance was produced with the help of an expert working group, who based their advice on the evidence base. The NTA have also published guidance on the prescribing of injectable opiates for the small group of drug misusers who do not respond to oral substitute prescribing.

Hospital Food

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures are in place to ensure that hospitals provide *(a)* nutritious and *(b)* high quality food for patients. [161649]

Mr. Hutton: The NHS Plan required hospitals, by 2004, to have a hospital nutrition policy to improve the outcome of care for patients and reduce dependency on intravenous feeding regimes. Hospitals should also ensure that their menus are subject to nutritional analysis to ensure they meet the needs of patients.

To assist hospitals in providing high quality food and food services, NHS Estates developed the Better Hospital Food programme. The national health service

is making good progress in delivering these new services which reflect patients' preferences and provide a wider range of food options, including recipes and product purchasing specifications. In addition, the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency has in place stringent controls to ensure the quality of all food for which contracts are negotiated on behalf of the NHS.

Patient environment action teams inspect the quality of food served in hospitals as part of their annual assessments.

Immigrant Medical Inspections

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria are used for referrals to medical inspectors of immigrants at *(a)* Heathrow Terminal 3, *(b)* other terminals at Heathrow, *(c)* Gatwick north terminal, *(d)* Gatwick south terminal and *(e)* Manchester airport; and what the reasons are for any differences. [156847]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Under paragraph 36 of the Immigration Rules (HC395 as amended), Immigration Officers have the power to refer any individual who is subject to immigration control to a doctor for a medical examination at the port of entry.

Long-standing policy is that any person subject to immigration control who:

- mentions health or medical treatment as a reason for coming to the United Kingdom, or appears unwell; or
- is seeking leave to enter the United Kingdom for six months or more and is at high risk of having been exposed to tuberculosis

should be referred by the Immigration Officer to a medical inspector.

We are advised by the Home Office that these criteria apply at all ports of entry.

Medical Students

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of medical graduates failed to embark on medical careers in each year since 1990. [161025]

Mr. Hutton: The information is not available in the form requested. The Medical Careers Research Group periodically surveys selected cohorts of medical school graduates. Their latest available data on whether doctors are still practising medicine is shown in the table.

Year of Qualification	*Cohort size*	*Not practising medicine*		*Not practising medicine in the UK*	
		Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
1974	2344	131	5.6	339	14.5
1977	3130	184	5.9	395	12.6
1983	3841	204	5.3	357	9.3
1988	3731	307	8.2	514	13.8
1993	3639	188	5.2	322	8.8
1996	3836	182	4.7	302	7.9

MMR Vaccine

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the take-up rate of MMR vaccine was in the last five years for which figures are available, broken down by strategic health authority. [162060]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information about the childhood immunisation programme, which includes children immunised by their first and second birthday, and from 1999 to 2000 by their fifth birthday, is derived from the COVER (Cover of Vaccination Evaluated Rapidly) system and collected by the Health Protection Agency.

Information about the uptake of MMR immunisations and other childhood immunisations is published annually in Department of Health Statistical Bulletins. The latest bulletin, "NHS Immunisation Statistics, England: 2002–03" is available in the Library and on the Department's website http://www.publications.doh.gov.uk/public/sb0316.pdf. This is the first year that uptake by strategic health authority has been available.

Quarterly figures on MMR Uptake from April 2003 to September 2003 are available on the Health Protection Agency's website at, http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/vaccination/cover_sha.htm

National Programme for Information Technology

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 4 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1112W, on the IT Programme, what the total projected cost of the National Programme for Information Technology was for each year when it was announced, including local and central procurement; what the latest available total projected cost is; and if he will make a statement. [160702]

Mr. Hutton: I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave him on 4 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1111W, which set out the projected costs of the national programme for information technology (NPfIT) when it was announced in June 2002.

Since that time contracts of up to nine years duration have been awarded under the NpfIT, as shown in the table.

Company	*Value (£ million)*	*Contract*
BT	620	National data spine
BT	530	National broadband network
Atos Origin SchlumbergerSema)	64.5	National e-booking service
Accenture	1,099	North East local service provider (LSP)
Accenture	934	Eastern LSP
BT	996	London LSP
CSC	973	North West and West Midlands LSP
Fujitsu	986	Southern LSP

Local spend by national health service trusts on IT has been approximately £850 million per year and this level of local investment from the baseline allocation needs to continue to provide adequate resource to support local implementation of the national programme.

National Service Frameworks

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for which of his Department's National Service

Frameworks specific funding has been allocated to primary care trusts for the delivery of the guidelines; and if he will make a statement. [161935]

Mr. Hutton: Revenue allocations to primary care trusts (PCTs) for 2003–04 to 2005–06 were announced on 11 December 2002. The allocations include funding for all national service frameworks and national policy developments. None of the growth money has been identified for specific purposes. PCTs will be able to use these extra resources to deliver on both national and local priorities.

Neurofibromatosis Association

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Neurofibromatosis Association will be told the outcome of their section 64 grant application for the development of a specialist adviser service. [162498]

Dr. Ladyman: The Neurofibromatosis Association were told the outcome of their section 64 grant application verbally on 19 March, and a letter of notification was sent to them on the same day.

NHS Capital Use

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list for each *(a)* NHS region, *(b)* strategic health authority and *(c)* NHS trust the (i) monetary value of approvals to use capital for revenue purposes, (ii) the number of approvals and (iii) the total capital allocation for 2002–03. [153933]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* The information requested has been placed in the Library.

NHS Professionals

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate *(a)* the total cost to date of NHS Professionals and *(b)* the total savings the agency has made in the cost of agency spending; and if he will make a statement; [159773]

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 4 February, *Official Report*, column 969W, on NHS Professionals, (1) what assessment he has made of how much NHS Professionals *(a)* has saved and *(b)* has cost to set up and run to date; [160415]

(2) how much funding NHS Professionals has received from the Department for set-up and running costs in each year since its inception; [160498]

(3) how much funding NHS Professionals is forecast to receive from the Department in future financial years; and whether it is predicted to be self-funding. [160593]

Mr. Hutton: NHS Professionals was initially allocated £7 million to support the start up of pilot sites. A further £24 million was invested in 2002–03 to support roll out and it is anticipated that approximately £22 million will be spent in 2003–04. The NHS Professionals Special Health Authority business plan for 2004–05 is currently being finalised. The business plan will set out the level of funding required for NHS Professionals to be self-sustaining in the longer-term.

The cost savings for National Health Service trusts using the NHS Professionals service are accrued at a local level and there is currently no central collection of this information. Information on local benefits and savings will be collected in future by the newly established NHS Professionals Special Health Authority.

NHS Staff (IT Qualifications)

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate he has made of the cost per individual of training and accrediting NHS staff with the European Computer Driving Licence for IT; and whether this estimate includes financial costs incurred through lost working hours; [161021]

(2) what the implications of the National Plan for IT in the NHS are for NHS staff who are unable to *(a)* demonstrate proficiency in IT and *(b)* obtain a European computer driving licence; [161022]

(3) which types of NHS staff will be required to obtain a European computer driving licence; [161023]

(4) how many NHS staff hold a recognised IT qualification for the purposes of working in the NHS; and whether such staff will be required to obtain a European computer driving licence; [161024]

(5) if he will estimate the number of NHS staff who will be required to obtain a European computer driving licence (ECDL); and whether staff who already have a recognised IT qualification will be required to obtain an ECDL. [161027]

Mr. Hutton: The European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) is a qualification recognised around the world for basic computing skills. General information technology skills should be seen as an everyday requirement for any service based organisation. The opportunity to gain the ECDL qualification is offered to all staff working in the National Health Service. For NHS staff, it provides a basic level of knowledge, which enables people to demonstrate their competence in computer skills. The ECDL is completed in modules and designed to be completed over time and to fit in and around any other work requirements.

There is no formal requirement for NHS staff to hold the ECDL for the purpose of working in the NHS. As a matter of good practice, and as part of its commitment to life-long learning, the NHS encourages all staff to develop appropriate skills, including competency in the use of IT.

The national health informatics development team within the NHS Information Authority has put in place central facilities to support local NHS organisations in training needs around the ECDL. Since the programme was launched in March 2003, 9,000 people have qualified and a further 54,000 have registered. It is expected that up 40 per cent. of NHS staff will register over the five year timescale of the central programme. The central programme provides central support for registration and validation of ECDL training that would otherwise fall to individual NHS organisations and is expected to cost £15 million. It remains the responsibility of local NHS organisations to provide local facilities. Specific costs for ECDL training by individual members of staff are not identified.

Training, development and deployment of staff is a matter for local management. The NHS is an organisation committed to equal opportunities and valuing diversity therefore appropriate opportunities and support should be made available for all staff regardless of whether they hold an ECDL qualification or not.

The Government hope that training and skills development are regarded as an integral part of employment, and that time spent by staff on training for any recognised vocational skill is not identified as lost.

NHS University Helpline

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many calls have been made to the NHS University Helpline in each month that the service has been operational; [162099]

(2) what the cost of establishing the NHS University Helpline was; and what estimate he has made of the monthly cost of operating it; [162100]

(3) on what date the NHS University Helpline started operating. [162101]

Mr. Hutton: The NHSU helpline—u-/—was launched on 24 November 2003.

The service is still in its early stages of development and will not become fully operational in the national health service until next financial year.

In the trial period to date, over 1,000 individuals have contacted the service seeking independent advice on learning and personal development.

The monthly figures are:

December—223

January—234

February—306

March (to 14 March 2004)—287

The set-up costs were £567,000

The estimated monthly operating costs for this period were £49,700.

Non-consultant Career Grade Doctors

Mr. Bruce George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the difference in pay between experienced non-consultant career grade doctors and general practitioners with special interests; and if he will make a statement. [161674]

Mr. Hutton: The Department has not conducted any specific assessment of this kind.

The pay of most non-consultant career grade doctors is based on the recommendations of the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration. Pay for general medical practitioners with special interests depends on the contract between the general practitioner and the employing or commissioning body.

Nursing and Midwifery Council

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions his Department has held with the Nursing and Midwifery Council on the eligibility of applicants from EU accession countries to register in the UK from 1 May; and if he will make a statement. [162089]

Mr. Hutton: The Department has kept in frequent contact with the Nursing and Midwifery Council both directly and through a meeting this week with the Alliance of UK Health Regulators on Europe to ensure that all the health care regulatory bodies are aware of their responsibilities in registering applicants from the new member states after 1 May 2004.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether proficiency in the use of the English language is a requirement for nurses from the European Union seeking to register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council in order to work in the NHS. [162091]

Mr. Hutton: Nurses who are European Economic Area nationals do not have to undertake English language competency tests in order to register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. The law does not currently permit this. It is the responsibility of national health service employers to ensure that all nurses they employ have the necessary English language competence to carry out their duties safely. They may require a nurse to undertake a language assessment as part of the recruitment process, regardless of which country they come from.

Nursing

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on measures he intends to take to ensure that the registered nursing care contribution bands reflect increases in nursing costs. [162618]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* The increases to the monetary values for national health service funded nursing care for 2004–05 are already in line with the 3.225 per cent, increase in NHS nurses' and midwives' pay, from April this year.

Opticians (NHS Vouchers)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what monitoring has been undertaken by his Department of the availability of opticians who will accept NHS vouchers for prescriptions for spectacles; [160677]

(2) what representations he has received on the reimbursement of opticians by NHS organisations of the value of NHS vouchers for spectacles; and if he will make a statement. [160678]

Ms Rosie Winterton: All optical premises registered on a primary care trust's list will accept national health service optical vouchers provided under the general ophthalmic service. At December 2002, there were 6,139 premises on PCT lists in England.

The Department has received occasional representation from individuals about the cost of optical vouchers not meeting the cost of spectacles. We recently announced that optical vouchers for people with high prescriptions would increase by 10 per cent, from 1 April. This will help with the additional cost of these high prescription lenses. As announced on 12 February we will continue to keep these voucher values under review.

Out-of-hours Provision

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health from which budget the *(a)* £30 million scheme for out-of-hours provision announced on 4 March and *(b)* the wider £100 million growth package will be paid. [160341]

Mr. Hutton: The £30 million of capital funds to incentivise out-of-hours provision is part of the wider £100 million growth package. These funds were allocated within 2004–05's record £3.6 billion capital resource, of which £3.3 billion was voted by Parliament, with the remainder funded through the sale of surplus property.

Paddington Basin Hospital Project

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to receive the report of the National Audit Office into the Paddington Basin Hospital project. [161464]

Mr. Hutton: No separate National Audit Office (NAO) report is being undertaken on the Paddington Basin hospital project. The NAO is involved in undertaking a joint review of this scheme together with Her Majesty's Treasury and the Department. Its report will be completed soon and will inform the next stage in taking forward this project.

Parkinson's Disease

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of the cost of the pharmaceutical management of Parkinson's disease in England. [162566]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 22 March 2004]*: Information is available on the cost of prescription drugs used to treat Parkinson's and related disorders that are dispensed in the community in England. We do not hold data centrally on the overall pharmaceutical cost of Parkinson's Disease (data on drugs dispensed in hospitals/clinics or private prescriptions).

The British National Formulary, section 4.9, identifies a group of drugs that are used for Parkinson's and related disorders. In 2002, 2.8 million items of drugs used in Parkinson's and related disorders were dispensed in the community in England. They had a net ingredient cost of £69.6 million. However, these drugs are not necessarily given only to people with Parkinson's and people with Parkinson's will receive drugs other than this group of drugs.

The data have been obtained from the Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) system from the Prescription Pricing Authority which covers all prescription items dispensed in the community in England.

Patient Education

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the capacity of NHS organisations to implement the National Institute for Clinical Excellence recommendations on patient education. [158030]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence published a technology appraisal on patient education models in diabetes in May 2003. It recommended that structured patient education is made available to all people with diabetes at the time of initial diagnosis and then as required on an ongoing basis, based on a formal, regular assessment of need. The National Health Service locally is usually required to make funds available to support NICE appraisal guidance within three months of publication. In the case of this guidance, the Secretary of State issued a direction to waive this requirement, as NICE advised that successful implementation of structured educational programmes would depend on the availability of an appropriately trained workforce. Primary care trusts, in working towards the Planning and Priorities Framework target of having practice based registers and systematic treatment for people with diabetes by 2006, should consider the introduction of structured education as an important element of a systematic treatment regime.

Personal Care Charges

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1111W, on personal care charges, if he will estimate the change in the cost of free personal care following the announced change in his Department's policy on the assessment of patients for fully funded continuing care costs. [159739]

Dr. Ladyman: The cost of free personal care remains within the range of estimates previously made by the Department. The Department's policy on continuing care has not changed. Assessment procedures have been strengthened to ensure people receive services on the basis of their assessed need.

Pharmaceutical Packaging

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many complaints the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has received in the past 12 months about changes by pharmaceutical distributors to manufacturers' packaging and related materials; [162005]

(2) whether the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has received representations about the health risks posed by changes to the packaging of pharmaceutical products during distribution; [162008]

(3) if he will introduce tighter guidelines on the right to change or modify the packaging of pharmaceutical products during the distribution process. [162009]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A pharmaceutical distributor in the United Kingdom is required to hold a wholesale dealer's licence (WL) issued by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). A WL does not authorise distributors to make changes to the manufacturers' packaging and related materials of licensed medicinal products; these activities require a separate assembly licence, also issued by the MHRA. A number of wholesale dealers hold assembly licences for the purpose of re-packaging licensed parallel imported medicines and this reply relates to this group of products.

The repackaging of licensed medicinal products, such as parallel imports, is controlled by the specification registered in the parallel import licence and may only be carried out by assembly sites licensed and inspected by the MHRA.

Parallel importers are not permitted to change the primary packaging of the product—that is the immediate packaging in contact with the product (for instance the blister packaging). The importer is however required to overlabel the immediate packaging in accordance with the European Union labelling regulations. This operation can be carried out by the importer if the company holds an assembly licence, issued by MHRA after inspecting the site.

Any repackaging and relabelling proposed by a parallel importer is considered by MHRA before a licence is issued. The labelling of all products must meet the Medicines Labelling Regulations as laid down in Title V of Directive 2001/83/EC and each product pack must contain a patient information leaflet in English. Guidelines on the labelling and packaging of medicinal products are also relevant to parallel imports.

In the past 12 months MHRA has received 107 letters or reports relating to medicinal products that have been repackaged and placed on the market in the United Kingdom as licensed parallel imports. These include 18 reports received by the MHRA Defective Medicines Report Centre concerning quality defects in the labelling or leaflets of re-packaged parallel imports, (which represents 6 per cent. of quality defects reported on all products).

A further 66 of the letters received, either directly or via ministerial offices, concern aspects of the labelling, packaging or leaflet of the imported products, of which 14 were from patients, patient carers and health professionals. The remaining 52 were from the UK Marketing Authorisation holders and 47 related to updating of patient information leaflets.

Radiographer Vacancies

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vacancies there are for radiographers in the NHS in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough. [162365]

Mr. Hutton: Information on qualified diagnostic and qualified therapeutic radiography staff vacancies in national health service trusts by strategic health authority and primary care trust in London has been placed in the Library.

Seroxat

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children in England are being prescribed Seroxat in *(a)* under 20 mg doses, *(b)* 20 mg doses and *(c)* over 20 mg doses. [162559]

Dr. Ladyman: Information is not available on the number of children who are prescribed Paroxetine Hydrochloride (Seroxat).

However, estimates of the number of prescription items of Paroxetine Hydrochloride that were dispensed in the community in England to children are available. These estimates show that in 2002 (the latest year for which figures are available) around 43,000 prescription items of Paroxetine Hydrochloride were dispensed in the community to children. This accounts for about one per cent. of all prescription items of Paroxetine Hydrochloride that were dispensed in the community.

The estimate is derived from the Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) system which covers all prescription items dispensed in the community in England. It does not include items dispensed in hospitals/clinics or private prescriptions. The estimate includes totals of prescription items for the chemical entity Paroxetine rather than Seroxat on its own, thus ensuring that any items dispensed generically are also included in the figures.

As with all prescription items, information on the dosage is not available.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are prescribed Seroxat in England; and what the number was in each of the last five years. [162562]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available in the requested format. The number of prescription items of paroxetine (seroxat) dispensed in the community in England in each of the last five years is shown in the table.

Number of prescription items (millions) of Paroxetine (Seroxat) dispensed in the community in England, from 1998

Year	*Number of prescription items (millions)*
1998	2.7
1999	3.1
2000	3.5
2001	3.8
2002	3.7
2003[1]	2.2

Notes:

The data is from the Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) system which covers ail prescription items dispensed in the community in England. It does not include items dispensed in hospitals/clinics or private prescriptions.

Paroxetine (Seroxat) is a selective-serotonin reuptake inhibitor and is defined in the British National Formulary (BNF) paragraph 4.3.3.

This data includes all items for the chemical entity Paroxetine; this includes the brand Seroxat and any generic prescriptions.

Data for 2003 is January to September only.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of general practitioners prescribe Seroxat in doses larger than 20 mg. [162563]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available in the requested format.

In 2002, 80 per cent. of all paroxetine (Seroxat) prescription items that were dispensed in the community in England were for the 20 mg tablet and 18 per cent. were for the 30 mg tablet. However, it is not possible to link this data back to individuals or general practitioners, so we do not know what doses individuals have been prescribed. Therefore, it is not possible to infer the percentage of practitioners prescribing paroxetine in doses larger than 20 mg from this information.

Speech and Language Therapists

Anne Picking: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average time is that a person has had to wait to be registered as a speech and language therapist in the last five years; [160250]

(2) how many applications to register speech and language therapists are waiting to be processed by the Health Professions Council; [160251]

(3) what plans he has to speed up the process of registering speech and language therapists. [160252]

Mr. Hutton: The Health Professions Council is an independent statutory regulatory body and this information is available directly from that organisation.

Risperidone

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received from Johnson and Johnson on the risk of stroke in atypical antipsychotics used on patients with dementia. [162424]

Dr. Ladyman: The marketing authorisation holder for risperidone, Janssen Cilag UK Ltd., is a wholly owned subsidiary of the United States company Johnson and Johnson. Aside from the data and interpretation received from Janssen Cilag and their corresponding applications to vary the UK Marketing Authorisations in respect of the risk of stroke associated with use of risperidone in patients with dementia, no representations have been received from the company.

Student Midwives

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* the total cost and *(b)* the cost per individual to his Department was of the training of student midwives in each year since 1997. [161545]

Mr. Hutton: The total cost and cost per individual of training student midwives for each year since 1997 are shown in the table.

	Total cost (£ million)	*Cost per individual (£) bursary, salary and tuition*
1997–98	42.6	11,988
1998–99	34.6	10,573
1999–2000	45.6	13,169
2000–01	51.4	13,959
2001–02	58.7	14,461
2002–03	59.0	14,132
2003–04	63.3	13,323

Notes:
1. 1997–98 and 2003–04 are forecasts (actual outturn was only collected from 1999 onwards).
2. Data in the above time series are not strictly comparable due to changes in the way data were collected,
3. Average bursary costs for nurses and midwives added to tuition costs from 2000–01 onwards.

Staffing (London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* nurses, *(b)* midwives, *(c)* nursing assistants and *(d)* professionals ancillary to medicine were employed in the area of each primary care trust in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough in (A) 1997 and (B) the most recent year for which figures are available. [162348]

Mr. Hutton: The information available has been placed in the Library.

Substance Misuse

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total NHS budget allocated to substance misuse treatment programmes for *(a)* drugs and *(b)* alcohol is in 2003–04. [162615]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* The pooled drug treatment budget totalled £243.6 million in 2003–04, which allowed for an average increase of 24 per cent., to primary care trusts in their allocation from this budget. It is also estimated that £200 million of mainstream national health service expenditure will be spent on drug treatment in 2003–04.

All funding for alcohol treatment services is drawn from the mainstream budgets of the NHS and local authorities. The amounts spent on treatment services from these budgets was substantial, although the method of funding means that it is not possible to give figures on expenditure.

Training Costs

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he collects on the percentage of annual staffing costs spent on training in the NHS. [162087]

Mr. Hutton: In 2002–03, the latest year for which actual outturn figures are available, the Multi Professional Education and Training (MPET) budget accounted for 11 per cent. of the national health service annual staffing costs. The MPET training budget excludes funds spent by NHS trusts and primary care trusts on training existing staff from within their own budgets because this information is not held centrally.

Tuberculosis

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new cases of TB were recorded in each year since 2000. [161168]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The total number of tuberculosis cases reported in England and Wales since 2000 is shown in the table.

Year	*Number of cases*
2000	6,271
2001	6,597
2002	6,907

Note:
[1] Provisional figure.
Source:
Health Protection Agency.

Waiting Lists/Times

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients are awaiting *(a)* in-patient

admission and *(b)* initial out-patient assessment in Greater London; and what the figures were in each of the last five years. [162385]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The latest available figures for in-patient elective admissions for London are shown in the following tables. Information is only collected for first outpatient attendances for those patients waiting over 13 weeks.

In-patient elective admission list for Greater London.

	Quarter	Total waiting list
1998–99	1	215,588
1998–99	2	201,181
1998–99	3	187,032
1998–99	4	167,783
1999–2000	1	169,894
1999–2000	2	167,338
1999–2000	3	171,301
1999–2000	4	162,303
2000–01	1	163,276
2000–01	2	158,109
2000–01	3	158,022
2000–01	4	156,353
2001–02	1	160,591
2001–02	2	159,094
2001–02	3	159,106
2001–02	4	160,458

Note:
These figures are for London Regional Office.
Source:
Department of Health form KH07

In-patient elective admission list for Greater London.

SHA Code	2002–03 Q1	2002–03 Q2	2002–03 Q3	2002–03 Q4	2003–04 Q1	2003–04 Q2	2003–04 Q3
North West London	31,252	32,355	32,940	30,509	30,851	28,977	29,469
North Central London	35,696	35,767	35,600	32,480	32,670	32,040	32,742
North East London	35,559	34,994	34,290	31,482	31,031	29,615	28,716
South East London	34,711	34,261	34,160	33,002	33,034	30,576	29,297
South East London	26,917	26,191	26,608	25,762	24,508	23,386	23,194

Source:
Department of Health form KH07

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough were awaiting physiotherapy assessment in each six-month interval in the last five years. [162386]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The information requested is not held centrally.

Training (EU Accession States)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what programmes his Department runs to help midwives from the EU accession states to adapt to working in the UK after 1 April. [162471]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for employers. We would expect them to provide appropriate induction programmes for all new recruits, whatever their country of origin.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what controls there are on *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses who began their training in an EU accession country before 1 May who wish to work in such professions in the UK after 1 May. [162472]

Mr. Hutton: The recognition of their qualifications, where these do not meet specified minimum training requirements, will be subject to proof of recent and substantial practice experience.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 25 March 2004

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Higher Education Bill

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many of the Higher Education Bill's *(a)* clauses and *(b)* schedules were (i) debated, (ii) partially debated and (iii) not debated during the recent committee stage. [162988]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 23 March 2004]*: 25 clauses of the bill were formally debated during Committee Stage. Debates over fourteen sessions were both wide-ranging and detailed. Debate on the fees provisions lasted for seven committee sessions, and ensured a very full exploration of the Government's policy on tuition fees. A similarly long debate on the Government's proposal to establish an Office for Fair Access lasted for three Committee sessions. 25 clauses and seven schedules were not debated. Among the clauses not debated are 10 clauses that cover technical, interpretative or commencement provisions. The wide-ranging discussion on several clauses meant that the debates touched on a number of issues associated with later clauses that were not formally reached.

In order to ensure that the policies and legislation in the Higher Education Bill were debated in detail, the Government encouraged the extension of several Committee sessions into the evening and added an extra day to the time allotted for Committee stage.

TREASURY

Ouzo

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans the Government have to make an additional submission to the European Court of Justice regarding the level of excise duty levied by the Greek Government on ouzo. [163308]

John Healey: Officials from Customs, DTI and DEFRA are in the process of considering the legal and practical implications of such an approach to the European Court of Justice.

Bicycles

John Thurso: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue was collected from the *(a)* import and *(b)* sale of bicycles in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by (i) country of origin and (ii) number of machines in each case. [163124]

John Healey: The number of non-motorised bicycles and other cycles (including delivery tricycles)[1] imported in 2003 from non-EU countries and the value of the revenue declared, broken down by country of origin, is shown in the following table:

[1] Classified under commodity code 8712.

Country of origin	*Supplementary units (number)*	*Customs duty*	*VAT*	*Anti-dumping duty*
Vietnam	695,302	3,431,085	4,972,919	0
Taiwan	666,837	4,440,437	5,886,069	1,177,805
Philippines	566,543	1,121,187	2,127,414	0
Bangladesh	348,234	20,983	1,969,880	0
Thailand	311,923	697,388	1,264,953	0
Sri Lanka	297,825	398,525	777,177	0
China	148,690	411,432	942,913	1,133,348
Tunisia	140,309	0	565,686	0
India	139,083	143,705	286,921	0
Poland	99,872	2,751	656,036	0
Indonesia	81,639	322,344	608,278	0
Bulgaria	66,698	0	316,292	0
Turkey	17,040	5,293	121,757	0
Hong Kong	12,926	86,467	118,037	0
Hungary	11,032	0	85,298	0
USA	5,722	320,545	429,810	0
Macao	1,975	17,476	24,113	0
Canada	1,300	42,490	57,378	0
Liechtenstein	978	0	11,556	0
Czech Republic	527	1,847	4,799	0
South Korea	497	2,767	3,900	0
Brazil	271	1,261	2,457	0
Japan	105	264	365	0
New Zealand	39	1,356	1,846	0
Australia	14	1,842	2,489	0
Switzerland	9	0	2,021	0
Malaysia	3	286	423	0
Total	3,615,393	11,1731,726	21,240,787	2,311,153

Source:
Overseas Trade Statistics, HMCE.

Imports from the EU are not subject to Customs duty. VAT is accounted for on acquisition but information is not available on VAT collected by commodity. Data collected on imports of bicycles from the EU do not include the member state of origin.

Sales of bicycles in the UK in 2002 using Office for National Statistics figures for household expenditure on the purchase of all bicycles were £974 million. Information on VAT collected by commodity is not available.

John Thurso: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the level and nature of taxes and other charges made by the Government relating to the *(a)* import and *(b)* sale of bicycles in the UK. [163125]

John Healey: The full rate of Customs Duty for bicycles imported from non-EU countries is 15 per cent. of total value.

Reduced rates of duty varying from zero to 10.5 per cent. are applicable to particular countries of origin. Full information on these rates is contained in the Customs and Excise Tariff.

EU Anti-Dumping duties at a rate of 30.6 per cent. of value are currently imposed on importations of bicycles from the Republic of China. Similar duties at a rate of 18.2 per cent. were in force during 2003 on importations from Taiwan. These expired on 26 February 2004.

VAT on bicycles, both imported and home-produced, is charged at the UK standard rate of 17.5 per cent. on the total amount payable by the purchaser.

Customs (Staffing)

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what effect the proposed merger of HM Customs and Excise with the Inland Revenue and reduction in staffing levels will have on the number of frontline uniformed customs officers in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* the Highlands and Islands and *(d)* Orkney and Shetland; and if he will make a statement. [163268]

Mr. Prosser: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which posts will be lost in HM Customs and Excise service under his plan to reduce numbers of civil servants. [163174]

John Healey *[holding answer 23 March 2004]:* The Chancellor has announced in this year's Budget the creation of a new Department, integrating the work of HM Customs and Excise and the Inland Revenue.

The new Department will be tasked with delivering the benefits of improved customer service, in particular reducing compliance costs, and improved compliance with tax law, as well as greater efficiency.

The reforms announced dovetail with the work conducted by the Gershon efficiency review. The integration of the departments, along with existing plans and proposed efficiency reforms, will create scope for overall savings equivalent to 14,000 posts by 2008. On the basis of policy commitments and plans to increase front line staffing in some areas, this will result in an overall reduction equivalent to 10,500 posts by 2008.

The location and nature of staffing changes will be determined in detailed business planning to be undertaken by the revenue departments and their new Executive Chairman, when appointed, who will be consulting as appropriate with all key stakeholders including trade unions.

Customs expertise in working at the borders to protect national security, collect revenue, facilitate trade and prevent smuggling will continue to play a vital role in the new integrated department.

EU Waste and Fraud

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the systems which are available to *(a)* control and *(b)* prevent (i) waste and (ii) fraud within the European Union; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of those procedures. [161698]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 25 March 2004]:* The Paymaster General made a full statement on these issues on 23 February in the debate in European Standing Committee B on the European Court of Auditors annual report and the Commission's Fight Against Fraud report. A further detailed assessment is provided in the Government's annual White Paper on the EC Budget and measures to counter fraud and financial mismanagement, the latest version of which was published in April 2003 [Cm 5800].

Public Service Agreement Targets

Tony Wright: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library the guidance provided to Departments on how they should report progress and achievement against their Public Service Agreement targets. [162930]

Mr. Boateng: A copy of the guidance issued for the spring 2004 departmental reports has been placed in the Library. This includes guidance on reporting against Public Service Agreement targets.

Working Tax Credit

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the level of overpayment in the year to April 2004 of the child care element of the Working Tax Credit due to *(a)* fraud, *(b)* claimant error and *(c)* departmental error. [163695]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Northavon (Mr. Webb) on 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1003–1004W.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Free Television Licences

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will amend the regulations on free television licences for those under the age of 75 in care homes. [163611]

Estelle Morris: Television licence fee regulations laid before Parliament on 11 March this year and due to come into force on 1 April include amendments to the rules governing the £5 Accommodation for Residential Care concessionary scheme, principally in response to changes in care homes legislation or for the clarification of entitlement. These amendments are not intended to make any changes of substance to the scope of the scheme's coverage. The Government have no plans at present for any wider changes to the concessionary scheme, but have made clear that the future funding of the BBC will be considered as part of the Charter review process. This will include a detailed examination of the concessionary arrangements.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Criminal Justice System (Women Professionals)

24. **Mr. Heath:** To ask the Minister for Women what recent discussions she has had with the *(a)* Lord Chancellor and *(b)* Law Officers on the role of women professionals in the criminal justice system. [163456]

Ms Hewitt: My colleagues and I agree that the more our Criminal Justice System reflects the society it serves, the better it will be.

I was delighted when Dame Brenda Hale was appointed the first women Law Lord in this country.

Alcohol

25. **Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Minister for Women what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health on women and alcohol. [163457]

Ms Hewitt: None. However the analysis that underpins the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England, published by the Government last week, highlights some key issues for women. Nearly one in five women now exceed 14 units of alcohol each week; on one in five occasions when women drink they do so to excess. The strategy will help tackle alcohol-related harm and its causes.

Career Opportunities (South-east)

26. **Mr. Denham:** To ask the Minister for Women what assessment she has made of the career opportunities open to women in the south-east of England. [163458]

Jacqui Smith: As my hon. Friend is aware, the Department is concerned to promote women's economic participation nationally.

The major changes my right hon. Friend has introduced to support flexible working and work-life balance—rights to request flexible working, increased maternity leave and pay, and paternity leave—are all making a real difference to women's participation.

I have tasked the Regional Development Agencies in the south-east, as elsewhere, to develop economic strategies that focus, among other things, on women's jobs and careers. The Government have increased funding to the RDAs in order to deliver these strategies.

Equal Opportunities

27. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Minister for Women if she will make a statement on equal opportunities for professional women in appointments to senior positions in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003. [163459]

Ms Hewitt: This Government are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for professional women in appointments to senior positions. The precise figures asked for are not available but since 1999 the number of women directors of a FTSE 100 company has increased from 6 per cent. to 9 per cent. In public appointments 36 per cent. of posts are held by women, an increase of 4 per cent. from 1998; and in the Civil Service, women hold 23 per cent. of the 600 top posts compared with 13 per cent. in 1998.

Civil Service (Pension Entitlement)

28. **Mr. Challen:** To ask the Minister for Women what steps are being taken to ensure that women in the Civil Service do not suffer from a gender gap in pension entitlement. [163460]

Jacqui Smith: The Civil Service pension scheme is a final salary scheme. Benefits are worked out as a proportion of final pensionable earnings multiplied by years of service. Steps are being taken to ensure the Civil Service provides equal pay, to help women who want to maximise their years of service, and to remove barriers to progression. These will all help to ensure that women in the Civil Service do not suffer from a pension gap in pension entitlement.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to expand the mandate of the provisional reconstruction teams in Afghanistan to enable them to respond to *(a)* human rights abuses, *(b)* factional clashes and *(c)* drugs production. [162967]

Mr. Ingram: The objectives of the British-led Provincial Reconstruction Team are to help the Afghan Transitional Authority extend its influence, to stimulate the development of Security Sector Reform and the reconstruction effort and so to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment in the Afghan regions. We have no plans to revise these objectives.

ALARM Missile

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how long the ALARM missile will remain in service. [162645]

Mr. Ingram: Under current planning assumptions, ALARM is due to remain in service until around the end of the next decade.

Armed Forces Postings

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many armed forces personnel have been posted to new locations in each of the last five years; and how many service families were required to move house within the UK and abroad in each year. [153829]

Mr. Ingram: The Naval Service are unable to provide accurate figures on postings to new locations as their information system does not distinguish between drafts of a week and longer tours of duty. The information could therefore be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Information on Army postings could also be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The number of RAF personnel posted to new locations is shown in the following table.

Financial year	*Officers*	*Ground Airmen*
1998–99	3,636	8,805
1999–2000	3,822	8,587
2000–01	4,156	8,105
2001–02	3,511	7,943
2002–03	3,601	7,783

The table details the number of postings for both officers and ground airmen. No statistics are held for Non Commissioned Aircrew as they tend to remain at the same unit for a number of years and therefore are likely to move around less often.

Postings where no physical movement has occurred have been excluded from these statistics. No data on detachments/attachments or deployments has been included.

The Defence Housing Executive records the numbers of moves into and moves out of Service Family Accommodation (SFA) in mainland UK. During 2003 around 24,000 SFA occupants moved within mainland UK or between SFA in Britain and married quarters overseas.

Reliable figures are not readily available for previous years and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Army Personnel (Self-harm)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 14 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 317W, on Army Personnel (self-harm), if he will make a statement on progress in the collection and analysis of the existing information on incidents of deliberate self-harm in the army. [163148]

Mr. Caplin: The Department is considering whether it is feasible to collect information on incidents of self-harm that would be reliable and consistent between the three Services. The work in hand is looking at the identification and recording of such incidents, reporting systems, analysis and data protection. This is, however, a complex area and an early conclusion is unlikely.

Climate Change

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent work his Department has carried out to assess the security implications for the UK of climate change; and if he will make a statement. [162884]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence is reviewing the implications of climate change for national security as part of its wider assessment of strategic trends which might impact on the United Kingdom's interests.

D-Day Commemoration

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which military bands will be attending commemorations for the 60th Anniversary of the Normandy Landings; of these bands, how many are being funded by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* other sources; and at which venues they each will be performing. [160248]

Mr. Caplin: Musical support will be provided by six bands, those of the Royal Marines (Scotland), the Normandy Band of the King's Division, the Royal Irish Regiment, the Parachute Regiment, the Army Air Corps and the Rifle Volunteers (Devon and Dorset). All are being funded by the Ministry of Defence: two centrally and four by unit budgets.

Currently there are 18 separate events which will be supported by one or more bands. The main events for each band are as follows:

Royal Marines—British Memorial Garden Reception afloat at Ouistreham on 4 June, tree-planting ceremony at Ouistreham on 5 June.

King's Division—veterans' homage to Field Marshal Montgomery at Colleville-Montgomery on 5 June, inauguration of the British Memorial Garden and Beating Retreat at Caen on 5 June, Binational Ceremony at Bayeux on 6 June, International Parade at Arromanches on 6 June (or Royal Irish Regiment), final parade of the Normandy Veterans Association at Arromanches on 6 June.

Royal Irish Regiment—inauguration of the British Memorial Garden and Beating Retreat at Caen on 5 June, International Parade at Arromanches on 6 June (or King's Division), final parade of the Normandy Veterans Association at Arromanches on 6 June.

Parachute Regiment—veterans of 3 Parachute Brigade event at Le Mesnil on 5 June.

Army Air Corps—inauguration of the HORSA glider at Ranville on 5 June, Remembrance Ceremony at Hermanville on 6 June.

Rifle Volunteers—Royal British Legion service at Bayeux Cathedral on 6 June, 231 Brigade commemoration at Asnelles on 6 June.

It is also expected that most of the bands will participate in the International Tattoo in Caen on the evening of 6 June, but the programme has yet to be finalised.

Data Protection

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made since the publication of the Hutton report of the right of employees of his Department to the protection of the Data Protection Act 1998 in relation to the disclosure of their names and identity to third parties without their consent. [163651]

Mr. Hoon: Lord Hutton makes no reference to the Data Protection Act in his report. No assessment has therefore been made of the rights of MOD employees to the protections of the Data Protection Act following the Hutton report.

Deepcut and Catterick Barracks

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 16 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 704W, on Deepcut and Catterick Barracks, with reference to the conclusion of the investigations by Surrey police, if he will order an independent inquiry into the Royal Military Police Special Investigation Branch; and if he will make a statement. [163146]

Mr. Ingram: The Surrey police, who retained primacy for investigating the deaths at Deepcut Barracks, have made no recommendation to the effect that an independent inquiry into the Royal Military Police Special Investigation Branch should be undertaken, and the Ministry of Defence has no plans to order one.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the external recommendations made by Brigadier Evans in his 1995 review of the Phase 2 training system at Deepcut barracks; how many of these recommendations were accepted; and what action was taken as a result; [162270]

(2) if he will list the internal recommendations made by Brigadier Evans in his 1995 review of the Phase 2 training system at Deepcut barracks; how many of these

recommendations were accepted; what action was taken as a result; and what assessment was made of the applicability of these measures to other barracks. [162269]

Mr. Ingram: Brigadier Evans' Review of the Phase 2 Training System within Deepcut made 30 detailed recommendations not all of which were accepted or adopted. I will write to my hon. Friend in more detail and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Defence Logistics Organisation

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the full costs will be of moving the Equipment Support (Air) Group from RAF Wyton to *(a)* Abbeywood and *(b)* the other possible locations being considered; [155554]

(2) in relation to the announcement made to staff at RAF Wyton on 26 January regarding the Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO) re-structuring, on what date the consultation ends; what the likely costs of this re-organisation are; what options other than a move to Abbeywood have been considered; and whether it is an option for other MOD centres for DLO to be moved to RAF Wyton; [155553]

(3) why the Defence Logistics Organisation Equipment Support (AIR) is changing its name to Domain 2*; and on what date the change will take place. [155552]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO) began formal consultation with the Trades Unions on 26 January about proposed changes to its structure. Detailed proposals, including possible changes of location, title or role, and associated costs, will flow from this initial consultation period.

Fire Study 2000

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received on Fire Study 2000; and what plans he has for a further study. [162592]

Mr. Ingram: I have received a number of representations concerning Fire Study 2000 from Members of Parliament, trade unions, and members of the Defence Fire Service. In particular these have concerned its relationship to the Airfield Support Services Project where the recommendations contained in Fire Study 2000 have also been used to inform the Public Sector Comparator.

There are no plans for a further study.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to implement the recommendations of Fire Study 2000. [162593]

Mr. Ingram: The recommendations contained in Fire Study 2000, identifying Fire Service efficiencies, also forms part of the Public Sector Comparator for the Airfield Support Services Project which is seeking to establish the most cost-effective method of maintaining a full airfield support service, without compromising operational effectiveness. No decisions have yet been made. However, should it be decided that a public-private partnership is not the best option then the Public Sector Comparator, including the recommendations contained in Fire Study 2000, would be implemented within two years. In the meantime we continue to examine what Fire Study efficiencies can be implemented pending the completion of the Airfield Support Services Project.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is his policy to require Fire Study 2000 to be subject to an independent specialist review to test its manpower and financial assumptions. [162671]

Mr. Ingram: Fire Study 2000 was commissioned in order to review the Ministry of Defence's fire services and develop an optimum organisation in line with the Government's Strategic Defence Review. The results of the study have also been used to inform the Public Sector Comparator for the Airfield Support Services Project (ASSP). All Public Private Partnership Projects such as the ASSP are subject to independent review by MOD scrutineers supporting the Department's Investments Approvals Board and, in some cases, by Her Majesty's Treasury. The underlying assumptions in Fire Study 2000 are therefore being reviewed as part of the overall ASSP evaluation process.

Fisheries Control Agency

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is planned that Royal Navy fisheries protection vessels will operate under the control of the Fisheries Control Agency; and if he will make a statement. [162964]

Mr. Ingram: We have no plans to change the existing arrangements between the Ministry of Defence and DEFRA for the operation of RN Fishery Protection vessels.

Haes Report

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what conclusions were reached by Lieutenant Colonel R. Haes report of 24 April 2001 concerning the exercise by the Army of the duty of care; what recommendations were made; how many of these have been acted upon; and if he will place a copy of the report in the Library. [162274]

Mr. Ingram: Lieutenant Colonel Haes' report on Army Training and Recruiting Agency Duty of Care and Supervision 98–01 made a significant number of wide-ranging recommendations. I will write to my hon. Friend and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Arrangements are being made to place a copy of the report in the Library of the House.

Interpreters

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* military and *(b)* non-military interpreters have been deployed to Iraq in each month since the beginning of hostilities in the country. [161281]

Mr. Ingram: Currently there are 15 UK-based civilian and 17 UK military interpreters in Iraq. The number deployed in each month is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Iraq

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 4 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1050W, on Iraq, if he will list the complaints against UK troops that have been upheld which have been recorded centrally; and if he will make a statement. [160506]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 16 March 2004]*: We record centrally cases in which the Special Investigations Branch of the Royal Military Police investigates Iraqi civilian fatalities allegedly caused by United Kingdom forces. As at 17 March the SIB had investigated 21 alleged cases. 10 investigations have been completed. In three the SIB concluded that the soldier had acted within his Rules of Engagement; in four—of road traffic accidents—the fatality was found to have been a genuine accident; and in three it was concluded that there was no case to answer. The remaining 11 investigations are on-going.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make public the report of the Special Investigation Branch into the deaths of six members of the Royal Military Police killed in Iraq in June 2003. [163218]

Mr. Ingram: In line with usual practice on the release of Service Police reports, we have no plans to make public the Special Investigation Branch (SIB) report into the deaths of the six RMPs who were killed in Al Majarr Al Kabir.

On 22 January 2004, the SIB provided an extensive briefing to the families of the soldiers who died and have undertaken to provide them with further updates should significant further information come to light as the investigation continues.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many bombing missions were aborted by RAF pilots during Operation Telic *(a)* in total and *(b)* owing to faulty target selection; and if he will make a statement. [163410]

Mr. Ingram: Royal Air Force aircraft aborted about 350 missions. 55 of these attacks were aborted due to inability to positively identify the target for example because it was obscured by smoke.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many bombs were exploded in mid-air before reaching their targets during Operation Telic; and if he will make a statement. [163411]

Mr. Ingram: None. The RAF does not possess in its inventory any weapons that can be detonated by the pilot after launch.

Mrs. Liddell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the contribution of UK forces towards the re-opening of schools in the southern Iraqi provinces. [143742]

Mr. Ingram: Work on schools is one of the Coalition's highest priorities in the reconstruction of Iraq. From the earliest weeks after the end of major combat operations on 1 May 2003 Coalition forces worked closely with UNICEF and other Non-Governmental Organisations to assess need and distribute packages of equipment. Since then a major refurbishment programme has been under way.

As at 25 February, within the Multinational Division (Southeast) area, coalition forces have refurbished and/or granted financial aid packages to 1,824 schools. A large amount of school equipment has also been distributed, including over 15,000 chalkboards, 200,000 student kits and 23,000 desks.

Manning Control

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff were employed in the last year in administering manning control reviews in the Army; how much money was spent; and if he will make a statement. [162729]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many AFB6848 forms have been signed in each year since 1995; and if he will make a statement. [162730]

Mr. Caplin: Statistics on how many AFB6848 are signed are not held centrally for longer than one year. During the period 1 March 2003 to 29 February 2004, some 28,000 AFB6848 were signed.

Marine Maddison

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 15 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 244W, on Iraq, with reference to the conclusion of the Navy Board of Inquiry into the Death of Marine Maddison, if he will order an independent inquiry into the Royal Military Police Special Investigation Branch; and if he will make a statement. [163147]

Mr. Ingram: The facts surrounding the first Special Investigation Branch investigation of the death of Marine Maddison have been established by a Naval Board of Inquiry. All the lessons to be learned from this fatality are being vigorously pursued, and we await the independent verdict of a Coroner's Inquest. A further independent inquiry would serve no purpose.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what factors underlay the decision of his Department to claim, originally, that the death of Marine Maddison was caused through enemy action; at what level the decision was made to support and publicise this claim; and if he will make a statement. [163167]

Mr. Ingram: The Department's initial position reflected the conclusion of the early, in-theatre investigation of Marine Maddison's death. When its conclusion that he was killed by enemy forces was found to be in error, this new information was conveyed at once to his next of kin with our deepest regrets. The error has also been fully acknowledged in public since the relevant Board of Inquiry was completed in December 2003.

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many *(a)* solely state-financed and *(b)* public-private partnership and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible have been launched in each region in each of the last 10 years; [160949]

(2) how much was spent by *(a)* the Government on solely state-financed projects and *(b)* the (i) Government and (ii) private sector on public-private and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible, in each of the last 10 years, broken down by region. [160950]

Mr. Ingram: Information relating to solely state-financed projects is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Information regarding public-private partnership and private finance initiative projects is published in the Signed Projects List which can be found on the Treasury website at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public_private_partnerships//ppp_pfi_stats.cfm.

Additional and supplementary information can be found on the MOD website at: http://www.mod.uk/business/ppp/database.htm.

RAF Brampton and Wyton

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the assessment of whether there are alternative defence uses for *(a)* RAF Brampton and *(b)* RAF Wyton to be concluded. [157311]

Mr. Ingram: No decisions have yet been made to relocate any existing function from either of the two sites. In any case, RAF Brampton and RAF Wyton are seen as having potential to accommodate a variety of other defence activities. It is, therefore, too early to say when final decisions on continued or alternative uses will be made. Any specific proposals will be subject to full consultation in due course.

Richard King

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recommendations were made by the Board of Inquiry into the death of Grenadier Guardsman Richard King; how many of these recommendations have been implemented; what further actions were taken against the 10 non-commissioned officers identified by the Special Investigation Branch and reported for neglect of duty; and how many of these officers have been promoted since the incident. [162258]

Mr. Ingram: The Board of Inquiry into the death of Guardsman King concluded that appropriate remedial measures had been put in place since the incident and therefore made no recommendations.

Investigations were conducted by both the South Wales Police and the Royal Military Police and the case was examined separately by both the Crown Prosecution Service and the Army Prosecuting Authority, neither of whom decided to prosecute any individual.

Nine out of the 10 non-commissioned officers who were reported for neglect of duty have since been promoted.

Royal Navy

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of Re-launching the image of the Royal Navy—A three-year communication strategy, published in November 2001. [152241]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Single Entry System

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what conclusions were reached by Brigadier Mountford in his 1993 review of the single entry system; what recommendations he made; how many of these were acted upon; and if he will place a copy of the report in the Library. [162266]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Type 23 Frigates

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the programme for fitting Sonar 2087 to Type 23 frigates has changed since 16 September 2003. [162670]

Mr. Ingram: There has been no change since the answer I gave on 16 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 709W, to the hon. Member.

Unexploded Ordnance

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what help will be given to QinetiQ to dispose of ordnance in the UK. [161872]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence funds the 25 year Long Term Partnering Agreement (LTPA) with QinetiQ under which the company provides a capability for ordnance disposal. The LTPA includes financial provision for infrastructure improvement which could be drawn upon by QinetiQ to provide more cost effective disposal or in order to meet environmental legislation.

Warships

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the basis was of the decision to decommission HMS Ark Royal in 2013. [162805]

Mr. Ingram: The replacement of the Invincible class aircraft carriers (CVS) by the future aircraft carriers (CVF) will be achieved through a phased programme. This will see CVF introduced prior to the full withdrawal of the CVS. It is intended that HMS Ark Royal will be the last CVS to be withdrawn from service in 2013.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what engine problems have been experienced by HMS Albion; and if he will make a statement. [162951]

Mr. Ingram: The engines on HMS Albion have proved to be extremely reliable in service. There have only been a small number of defects, none of them significant. While there have been defects affecting the supporting cooling systems and electrical control systems, these have been rectified by the shipbuilder and the systems have generally performed to a level consistent with any First of Class vessel entering service.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) for what reasons HMS Triumph is being laid up prior to her refit; and for how long the vessel will have been laid up before refit work commences; [162953]

(2) what the basis was of the decision to decommission HMS Triumph 12 months before its refit was due to commence; and what functions the ship will undertake prior to decommissioning. [162806]

Mr. Ingram: HMS Triumph will begin her refit in summer 2005, as originally planned. She arrived in Devonport at the end of January 2004 and her further operation will not be possible until essential refuelling and safety justification work has been undertaken. Once HMS Talent, currently in refit, vacates her dock, the dock-dependent refit work on HMS Triumph will begin. In the meantime, to make optimum use of the facilities and resources at the dockyard, the Department is seeking to reduce the overall length of the refit by identifying that work which is not dependent on a dry dock and may be undertaken ahead of the main refit and refuelling work. In addition, a reduced ship's company, in conjunction with dockyard employees, will conduct trials to inform the content of the refit package.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the operational status is of HMS Ark Royal; and whether she is being put out into extended readiness; [162974]

(2) how many Royal Navy aircraft carriers are operational. [162978]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently two operational Royal Navy aircraft carriers, HMS Invincible and HMS Ark Royal. HMS Ark Royal is currently operational, but will be moved to a state of extended readiness from April 2004. HMS Illustrious will return to operational service in 2005 following a period in refit.

SCOTLAND

Censuses

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the financial consequences of reducing the 100-year census closure period for decennial population census records for Scotland. [160428]

Mrs. McGuire: None. Responsibility for such an assessment lies with the Scottish Executive as this is a devolved matter.

The Minister responsible in the Scottish Executive is Cathy Jamieson, Minister for Justice.

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the years in which each of the 1851 to 1901 decennial censuses were released for public inspection. [160655]

Mrs. McGuire: The General Register Office for Scotland (GRO(S)), an associated department of the Scottish Executive, is responsible for carrying out periodic censuses of Scotland's population.

The Scottish Census returns for 1841–71 were opened to public inspection in 1923. The returns for 1881 and 1891 were opened to public inspection, though with some restrictions on copying, in 1955. The records for 1901 were opened to public inspection at the end of 2001.

Energy Policy

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on energy policy in Scotland. [155909]

Mrs. McGuire: The February 2003 Energy White Paper "Towards a Low Carbon Economy" defines the Government's overall strategy for energy policy. Its four core objectives—cutting carbon emissions, maintaining reliability of energy supplies, promoting competitive markets to promote productivity and sustainable growth, ensuring every home is adequately and affordably heated—apply and will deliver benefits in Scotland as elsewhere. I take part in the work of the sustainable energy policy network in following through on the White Paper commitments. Scottish Executive Ministers are closely associated with this work.

Core aspects of energy policy and related issues of competition and regulation are reserved. Devolved policy responsibilities in Scotland include promotion of renewables and of energy efficiency. Co-operation in devolved policy areas including planning, environmental protection, encouraging economic development and a skilled work force is crucial to the success of energy policy in Scotland. Good working relations at all levels between the Scottish Executive and UK Government Departments are therefore especially important.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Assembly Ombudsman

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to extend the remit of the Assembly Ombudsman to include further education colleges; whether he has met with representatives from further education colleges to discuss the issue; and if he will make a statement. [162703]

Jane Kennedy: The Government have no current plans to extend the remit of the Assembly Ombudsman to directly include Further Education Colleges. The Offices of the Assembly Ombudsman and Commissioner for Complaints are currently subject to review. Following consideration of the outcome of that review any proposed changes to the remit of the Ombudsman will be matters for public consultation.

Assets Recovery Agency

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the value of assets *(a)* recovered and *(b)* frozen is since the Assets Recovery Agency was formed. [161687]

Jane Kennedy: The Assets Recovery Agency in Northern Ireland is currently dealing with 22 cases with a total asset value of over £9.9 million. Of these, 16 are under active investigation. The Agency has frozen assets totalling £2.8 million in five of the remaining cases and is pursuing one case through taxation.

Further Education

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* research was undertaken and *(b)* evidence was collected during the development of the recent further education strategy proposals, with particular regard to (i) the balance between full-time and part-time lecturing staff, (ii) the number of students taking vocational courses at further education colleges and (iii) the proportion of the 16 to 21 age cohort taking vocational courses at further education colleges. [162704]

Jane Kennedy: The publication of the Draft Strategy for further education is the result of a wide range of consultations and research exercises conducted since autumn 2002. In addition to a public consultation on the future role of further education and an analysis of course provision, enrolments and performance by the 16 local further education colleges, new research was commissioned by DEL to supplement existing information on the work of the colleges. This new research addressed: the qualifications of further education staff; the qualifications of 16–19 year olds entering full-time education; the contribution of further education to economic development; and, an evaluation of the current funding mechanism. The findings of this considerable body of information were augmented further by a number of study visits aimed at evaluating best practice in vocational education.

The proposals set out in the draft strategy are now subject to a second period of public consultation that closes on 30 June 2004. Much of the research is already available on the DEL website and a summary document on this underlying evidence will be published shortly.

With regard to specific areas highlighted, the data collected by the Department shows:

(i) a total of 1,815 full-time and 3,113 part-time lecturing staff in respect of the 2001–02 academic year (source: college returns);

(ii) the total number of students taking vocational courses across all colleges in the 2001–02 academic year was 121,930 (Source: Further Education Statistical Records—FESR);

(iii) the total number of students aged 16–21, studying vocational courses across the N. Ireland further education sector was 48,792 in 2001–02. This represented approximately 33 per cent. of the 16–21 year-old mid year population estimate for 2001 (Source: 2001 census).

International Monitoring Commission

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what annual salary will be paid to members of the International Monitoring Commission; and what he estimates Commission members' average annual expenses will be. [160587]

Jane Kennedy: The Independent Monitoring Commission Commissioners will not be paid an annual salary. The Commissioners receive a per diem rate of £600, the Commissioners may also claim £25 per day and, in addition, their travel and subsistence costs are met.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the *(a)* cost of setting up and *(b)* annual running costs of the International Monitoring Commission. [160588]

Jane Kennedy: I estimate the costs associated with establishing and running the Independent Monitoring Commission up to the end of financial year 2003–04 to be approximately £600,000. I estimate that the annual running costs will be approximately £2 million, up to half of which will be borne by the Irish Government. I intend to make IMC accounts available in due course.

Mental Health Services

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many emergency psychiatric bed spaces there are in Northern Ireland, broken down by location; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of this provision to deal with the demand. [163299]

Angela Smith: The Eastern Health and Social Board has six acute psychiatric units providing a total of 224 beds. These are located at Belfast City Hospital, Mater Hospital, Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Lagan Valley Hospital, Ards Hospital and Downshire Hospital.

The Northern Board has three acute psychiatric units providing 134 beds. These are located at the Ross Thompson Unit, Holywell Hospital and Whiteabbey Hospital.

The Southern Board has two acute psychiatric units providing 120 beds. These are located at St. Luke's Hospital and the Psychiatric Unit at Craigavon Area Hospital.

The Western Board has two acute psychiatric units providing 104 beds. These are located at Gransha Hospital and Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital.

A major review of mental health law, policy and service provision is currently under way. This will look at the issues of hospital provision as well as alternatives to emergency admissions.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many mental health trusts in Northern Ireland have fully established women-only day care facilities. [163048]

Angela Smith: There are no fully established women-only day care facilities in any of the Health and Social Services Trusts in Northern Ireland.

New Deal

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have gained employment as a result of enrolling in the *(a)* New Deal for 18 to 24-years-olds, *(b)* New Deal 50+, *(c)* New Deal for Disabled People, *(d)* New Deal for people aged 25+ and *(e)* New Deal for Lone Parents in each year since their introduction; and what steps he is taking to increase such figures. [161284]

Jane Kennedy: The New Deal programmes are a part of the Government's Welfare to Work Initiative and are aimed at assisting unemployed people from benefit into employment. All New Deal programmes are kept under review and developed to ensure that they meet the needs of their target groups. Independent evaluations are carried out on a regular basis as part of this review process.

The number of people who have gained employment as a result of participating in the New Deals are as follows:

Numbers into sustained employment[1, 2]

	New Deal for 18 to 24-year-olds	*New Deal 50+*	*New Deal for Disabled People*	*New Deal 25+*
1998–99	2,165	[3]0	[4]0	307
1999–2000	3,296	[3]0	[4]0	4,114
2000–01	2,398	523	283	2,521
2001–02	2,010	529	177	1,697
2002–03	1,965	483	436	1,751
2003–04[5]	1,455	—	511	1,036

Total number into employment—New Deal for Lone Parents[6]

	Full-time	*Part-time*
1998–99	543	35
1999–2000	1,213	115
2000–01	1,601	234
2001–02	1,779	221
2002–03	1,967	249
2003–04[5]	1,125	157

[1] A participant is considered to have sustained employment if they remain in the same spell of employment for 92 days or more.

[2] A participant is only ever counted once as starting employment.

[3] New Deal 50+ was introduced in April 2000.

[4] New Deal for Disabled People was introduced across Northern Ireland in April 2000.

[5] Figures for 2003–04 will be subject to revision as data on those who moved into employment towards the end of 2003 and the beginning of 2004 and subsequently sustain that employment becomes available.

[6] The Social Security Agency is responsible for the administration of New Deal for Lone Parents.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of 18 to 24-year-olds in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* the Foyle constituency entered paid employment within six months of completing New Deal programmes in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [162937]

Jane Kennedy: During the period 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 the percentage of leavers from the New Deal for 18 to 24-year-olds entering paid employment within six months of completing the programme was:

(a) 31 per cent. in Northern Ireland; and

(b) 25 per cent. in the Foyle parliamentary constituency.

Pregnancy (Triple Test)

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidelines have been issued to each of the Northern Ireland health boards regarding the triple test for pregnant women. [162723]

Angela Smith: No guidance has been issued to Health Boards in Northern Ireland on use of the triple test for screening pregnant women in relation to Down's syndrome.

Serious Organised Crime Agency

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the role of the Government's proposed Serious Organised Crime Agency will be in Northern Ireland. [161977]

Jane Kennedy: The Serious and Organised Crime Agency will have a UK wide remit. However, because of the distinctive features of organised crime in Northern Ireland a regional focus will be maintained and the PSNI will continue to have a central role in tackling organised crime.

A representative from the new agency will join the Northern Ireland Organised Crime Task Force.

Ulster Scots

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will publish the results of *(a)* surveys and *(b)* measurements of demand for the Ulster-Scots language in Northern Ireland. [159542]

Angela Smith: The results of the 1999 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey are currently published on the internet (www.ark.ac.uk/nilt).

My officials are currently finalising and preparing for publication the Dunne report, which includes research dating back to 2002. The published report will include the results of the 2000 and 2001 Omnibus Survey. I envisage that the report will be published before the summer.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Small Arms

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what provision has been made to extend funding for *(a)* the small arms and light weapons global conflict prevention pool beyond 2004 and *(b)* the United Nations development programme global weapons collection programme. [163368]

Hilary Benn: The Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Strategy allocation for 2004–5 is £6.0 million. It is expected that the allocation up to 2006–07 for all strategies including SALW will be agreed by Ministers towards the end of 2004.

Support for the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Small Arms Project on Weapons Collection, Management and Destruction comes from the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP), jointly managed by the Department for International Development, Ministry of Defence and Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The current phase of support is worth £7.5 million and runs for three years, ending in April 2004. We are currently considering a proposal to extend funding for a further period.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to extend small arms and light weapons destruction projects. [163428]

Hilary Benn: DFID is keen to provide continued support to programmes which demonstrate their ability to reduce the availability of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) through stockpile management, collection and destruction initiatives.

Support for United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP's) Small Arms Project on Weapons Collection, Management and Destruction comes from the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP), jointly managed by DFID, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). The current phase of support is worth £7.5 million and runs for three years, ending in April 2004. We are currently considering a proposal to extend funding for a further period.

The UK Government will provide on-going support in 2004–05 towards the development of a five year National Action Plan in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique and Namibia. These plans will provide a comprehensive approach to weapons control in these countries and will include disarmament, destruction and weapons management.

The GCPP will continue to fund a Brazilian NGO, Viva Rio in 2004–05. The next part of the programme will commence in April 2004 and will contain stockpile, destruction and tracing initiatives as part of their awareness raising campaign.

In joint co-operation with MOD and FCO we are also increasing our funding to the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean to co-ordinate and execute assistance to several Latin American countries during 2004 for weapons destruction and stockpile management, including the organisation of public events.

DFID is also planning new SALW destruction projects in the Balkans.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether his officials have discussed assistance to the Economic Council of West African States to combat small arms problems in West Africa with the ECOWAS secretariat. [163429]

Hilary Benn: DFID recognises that more needs to be done to combat small arms proliferation in West Africa. In recent months DFID, together with the FCO and MOD, and other donors have been working closely with Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and is member states to take forward a number of emerging opportunities. An outcome of this is that the UK is part funding an ECOWAS conference on Combating illicit Small Arms Brokering during March. As well as focusing on arms brokering this Conference will also review the existing ECOWAS moratorium on small arms and the proposed roles and responsibilities of the ECOWAS Small Arms Unit. The UK contribution for the Conference will be financed through the Global Conflict Prevention Pool to which DFID, FCO and MOD all provide funding.

CDC and Actis

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the total cost of new office space procured for *(a)* CDC and *(b)* Actis is; and what price per square foot has been paid for each of their new London offices. [157827]

Hilary Benn: The total costs and price per square foot of the new office space for both CDC and Actis are covered by confidentiality clauses in the contracts between the two companies and their respective landlords. The landlords have been asked to waive these restrictions but have declined to do so for commercial reasons. I am not therefore able to provide the information requested.

However, achieving the best value for money has been a priority in the decision to move into the two new offices. CDC's old office was in need of expensive refurbishment to its ventilation and cabling. Furthermore, its 52,000 sq ft of floor space had become too large for a staff complement, which had fallen from some 270 to around 170 over the last few years. The combined floor space of the two new offices amounts to some 32,000 sq ft in comparison. By selling their old office, CDC have also realised the value of the property (some £24 million) which can now be used for CDC's mission of investment in the private sector in poorer developing countries.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Long-service Awards

10. **Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to introduce legislation on the issuing of long-service awards by companies. [163442]

Jacqui Smith: Long-service awards can benefit both employers and employees. Depending on the circumstances, such awards might amount to indirect age discrimination under the Article 13 European Employment Directive, which requires discrimination on the grounds of age in employment and vocational training to be outlawed by December 2006. We intend that our implementing legislation will provide for employers to be able to continue to offer justifiable long-service awards.

National Minimum Wage

11. **Mr. David Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of people benefiting from the recent uprating of the national minimum wage. [163443]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Based on the Office for National Statistics' Low Pay data released in 2003, the DTI estimates that between 1.6 million and 1.9 million people in the UK stand to benefit from the October 2004 uprating of the national minimum wage which was announced last week.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of people benefiting from the recent uprating of the national minimum wage. [163569]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Based on the Office for National Statistics Low Pay data released in 2003, the DTI estimates that between 1.6 million and 1.9 million people in the UK stand to benefit from the October 2004 uprating of the National Minimum Wage which was announced last week.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* adults, *(b)* 16 and 17-year-olds and *(c)* households in Leeds West that will benefit from the minimum wage rise in October 2004. [162606]

Mr. Sutcliffe: DTI analysis of low pay data from the Office for National Statistics suggests that between 180,000 to 210,000 workers in Yorkshire and the Humber stand to benefit from the October 2004 uprating of the national minimum wage. More detailed information by constituency is not possible using the data available. Information on 16 to 17-year-olds and on households is neither available by region nor by constituency due to small sample size.

Defective Products (Mandatory Recalls)

12. **Mr. McWalter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will create an independent national body to oversee all mandatory recalls of defective products. [163444]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Having carefully considered the option of creating an independent national body we have decided not to pursue this course of action.

Music Industry

13. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the economic contribution of the music industry in the United Kingdom; and if she will make a statement. [163445]

Ms Hewitt: Music is, and has been for many years, one of the most vibrant sectors of the UK economy. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, who have responsibility for the music industry, estimates that the UK is the third largest market in the world for sales of music and is second only to the USA as a source of repertoire. According to the DCMS sponsored report by the National Music Council on the economic contribution of the UK music business, "Counting the Notes (2002)", the music industry generated a total value added in excess of £3.6 billion in 2000.

Small Firms Legislation

14. **Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the way the Government consults small firms on new legislation. [163446]

Nigel Griffiths: The Government established a Small Business Council in May 2000 to advise and report on the effects that the Government have on small business, including regulation. William Sargent SEBC Chair acts as the 'voice' for small business across Whitehall—in this role he also has direct access to the Prime Minister and attends Ministerial Panel of Regulatory Accountability.

Chemical Industry

15. **Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Department is taking towards deregulation of the chemical industry. [163447]

Jacqui Smith: The Government continually looks for ways to improve the regulatory regime, and we will be establishing a new chemical industry forum to discuss options for better regulation, as announced by the Chancellor in last week's budget. Appropriate regulation of the chemical industry is, of course, necessary to ensure proper protection of human health and the environment.

European Union (Balance of Trade)

16. **Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the balance of trade with the European Union was in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and what the balance was *(a)* five and *(b)* 10 years ago. [163448]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: In the year to the third quarter of 2003, the UK's balance of trade in goods and services deficit with the European Union was 2.5 per cent. of GDP. In 1998 and 1993 the deficits were 0.7 and 0.9 per cent. respectively. In 1988 it was 3.7 per cent.

Nuclear Power (Emissions)

17. **Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make it her policy under the

United Kingdom national allocation plan to exempt nuclear generation from the EU emissions trading scheme. [163449]

Mr. Timms: While nuclear generation does not produce emissions of carbon dioxide, the associated combustion installation which emits carbon dioxide and with a rated thermal input exceeding 20 MW is subject to the EU emissions trading scheme.

West Africa (Export Control)

18. **Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will discuss with representatives of the Economic Community of West African States the Department's policy on extraterritorial export control legislation. [163450]

Nigel Griffiths: Yes my hon. Friend the Minister for Africa wrote last December to Dr. Ibn Chambas, Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States, to explain the Government's policy on extra-territorial controls.

The Minister discussed the issue again when he saw Dr. Chambas in New York this February.

Productivity (Yorkshire and the Humber)

19. **Mr. Challen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to improve productivity in Yorkshire and the Humber. [163451]

Jacqui Smith: The Government are committed to raising the productivity of UK business in order to provide prosperity for everybody in our country. Within Yorkshire and the Humber, my Department works closely with Yorkshire Forward, the Regional Development Agency for the region, which has made improved productivity a key priority in then Regional Economic Strategy.

Since its launch in may 2002, the Yorkshire and Humber Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) has contacted 691 companies. This has resulted to date in company improvements in productivity added value of £7.8 million per annum.

Internet Access

20. **Mr. David:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of how the level of internet access in the United Kingdom compares with that in other European countries. [163452]

Mr. Timms: The Office of the e-envoy published an independent international benchmarking assessment in Nov 2002—The Worlds Most Effective Policies for the e-Economy—which presents international comparisons of internet access and use across the G7. The assessment shows the UK to be ahead of other European G7 countries for household internet access.

Alcoholic Beverages

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she is planning to ensure that beer drinkers receive a full pint when purchasing alcoholic beverages on licensed premises. [163469]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 17 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 321W.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research the Department has undertaken on whether beer drinkers receive a full pint on licensed premises. [163470]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department's consultation document 'Draught Beer and Cider' of March 2002 reported the results of a number of surveys by local authorities.

This consultation document has been placed in the Libraries of the House and can be viewed at www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/consultpdf/beer2.pdf.

BNFL

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many fixed price contracts have been undertaken by BNFL in the USA in each of the last 10 years. [162875]

Mr. Timms: BNFL operates in several sectors in the US, principally environmental clean-up through its subsidiary BNFL Inc and fuel manufacture and reactor services through its subsidiary Westinghouse Electric Company. It would not be practical to list specific details of contracts.

I would refer the hon. Member to an answer I gave to the hon. Member for North-West Norfolk (Mr. Bellingham) on 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 225W.

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 17 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 321–22W what estimates of further losses are envisaged by BNFL Inc; and what other potential losses in the USA BNFL Inc have informed the Department of. [163074]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Lewes (Norman Baker), on 22 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 517W.

Conferences and Seminars

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 12 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1775W, on conferences and seminars, for what reason she does not maintain a central register of the *(a)* number and *(b)* cost of conferences and seminars that have been cancelled since June 2001. [162603]

Ms Hewitt: Responsibility for conferences and seminars rests with individual business units in DTI. Statistics on cancellation of such events with associated costs are not normally required for business reasons and are therefore not collected centrally.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the *(a)* resource budget, *(b)* administration costs and *(c)* staff numbers of the (i) Database Market Strategy Group (Patent Office), (ii) Small Business Investment Task Force, (iii) Small Business Council, (iv) Partnership Fund Assessment

Panel, (v) Measurement Advisory Committee, (vi) Industrial Development Advisory Board, (vii) Council for Science and Technology, (viii) Committee on Cleaner Coal Technology, (ix) National Consumer Council, (x) Gas and Electricity Consumer Council and (xi) British Hallmarking Council are for 2003. [162421]

Ms Hewitt: The resource budget set by DTI for the National Consumer Council for the financial year 2003–04 is £4,059,000. The forecast average staff numbers for the National Consumer Council is 51.2 full time equivalents.

The resource budget set by DTI for the Gas and Electricity Consumer Council for the financial year 2003–04 is £12,300,000. The forecast average staff numbers for the Gas and Electricity Consumer Council is 296 full time equivalents.

The resource provided by DTI for these bodies is funded from DTI's programme budgets. The amount of their expenditure, which would be regarded as administrative costs will be published in each body's audited annual accounts.

The following bodies do not have separate resource budgets or staff. DTI provide the secretariat services in these cases and expenditure is met from within DTI's internal resource budgets.

Council for Science and Technology

Industrial Development Advisory Board

Measurement Advisory Committee

Small Business Investment Task Force

Small Business Council

Partnership Fund Assessment Panel—closed December 2003

The Committee on Cleaner Coal Technology—closed June 2003

The British Hallmarking Council is funded by the Assay Offices and does not receive a resource budget from DTI. It has one member of staff.

The Database Market Strategy Group (Patent Office) has no budget or staff. Its secretariat is provided by the Patent Office. No internal budget has been set for this body. It has not met during 2003–04.

Departmental Scientific Adviser

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether her Department has a chief scientific adviser. [162479]

Ms Hewitt: The Department of Trade and Industry appointed David Hughes as Director General of Innovation Group and Departmental Chief Scientific Adviser (DCS A) in October 2002. David Hughes is a member of the Department's Executive Board.

Sir David King, the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, reports direct to the Prime Minister and to Cabinet. He provides advice to the Government as a whole on science, engineering and technology (SET) matters. Sir David heads the Office of Science and Technology which is located in my Department.

I meet both regularly and Sir David meets David Hughes and the other Departmental Chief Scientific Advisers on a regular basis.

Drug Treatments in Developing Countries

Mr. Battle To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on progress in making cheaper generic drug treatments available to developing countries, pursuant to the World Trade Organisation agreement on trade related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and Public Health of August 2003. [162590]

Ms Hewitt: The UK Government will be working with our European partners on incorporating the WTO Decision on TRIPs and Public Health into law at EU level. This will enable both the granting of compulsory licences for export of patented medicines in the circumstances laid down in the decision, and appropriate safeguards to ensure that medicines exported in this fashion are not diverted from their intended recipients.

E-Auctions

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the potential impact of closed e-auction policies by supermarket stores on the health and safety compliance rates of contracting companies. [160140]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I understand that the hon. Member may have information regarding a reduction in health and safety standards. This is a matter for the Health and Safety Executive who may be able to respond appropriately if provided with detailed information.

Employment Rights Booklets

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether her Department conducted an impact assessment under its race equality scheme of its decision to cease production of hard copy prints of most employment rights advice booklets. [162650]

Mr. Sutcliffe: No. Employment rights information is available from the Department's website or, in paper form, from Acas.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1676–77W, on employment rights advice booklets, on what date the organisations listed were invited to join the practitioner group established as part of the review of her Department's information services; which of the organisations listed subsequently *(a)* became a member of the practitioner group and *(b)* attended meetings of the practitioner group; on what dates; and which organisations (i) declined to join the practitioner group and (ii) did not respond to the invitation. [162651]

Mr. Sutcliffe: A letter inviting organisations to join the group was sent on 28 May 2002. Membership was through attendance at the meetings. The letter did not ask for a response if the offer was declined. Records were not kept of organisations that did not respond.

Following is a list of organisations represented at the meetings.

Meeting of Employment Information Practitioners' Group: stakeholder attendance list

9 June 2002

CBI
Leo Abse and Cowen
British Chambers of Commerce
West Midlands Low Pay Unit

10 July 2002

Pattinson Brewer (formerly worked for Leo Abse and Cowen)
TUC
FSB
Parents at Work
EOC
Maternity Alliance
ACCA
EEF
Employment Law Consultants
NSPCC
Construction Confederation
BRC

2 October 2002

British Hospitality Association
West Midlands Employment and Low Pay Unit
Parents at Work
Maternity Alliance
SBC
TUC
Acas Council member
British Retail Consortium
EEF
CIPD
Equal Opportunities Commission
Construction Confederation
Federation of Private Business
Employment Law Consultants
Canary Wharf plc
ACAS
ACCA

Entrepreneurship

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to promote an enterprise culture within educational establishments. [163312]

Ms Hewitt: In encouraging entrepreneurial attitudes among young people, the DTI has supported Enterprise Insight in developing a national campaign to promote enterprise to young people and to those who influence them (including teachers, careers advisers etc). This campaign will have as its focal point an annual Enterprise Week, the first of which will be from 15 to 21 November this year. Enterprise Week will include national and regional activities and celebrations of entrepreneurial achievement.

The DTI also supports the activities of Young Enterprise, in offering young people practical experience of what enterprise entails through simulated entrepreneurial situations. Specifically, through the SBS it supports YE's Graduate Programme, Masterclass and Innovation Awards.

The DTI is also working closely with the DfES and the Treasury in taking forward the recommendations of the Davies Review. From 2005–06 all Key Stage 4 pupils will receive the equivalent of five days enterprise activity, which develops enterprise capability—innovation, creativity, risk-management and risk-taking, and financial and business understanding. 151 Enterprise Pathfinder projects were launched last September, covering nearly 400 secondary schools in England, from which DfES will derive guidance for all schools prior to launching the £60 million enterprise education entitlement in September 2005. A second wave of Pathfinders will start in September 2004.

The two Departments are also supporting the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship. Building on existing good practice, the aims of the Council will be to raise the profile of entrepreneurship and starting a business as a career option within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), including both universities and other higher education establishments, with the objective of increasing the numbers of students and graduates who give serious thought to this. It will therefore work with all interested parties to encourage and create an entrepreneurial culture among students and graduates.

Fireworks Act

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what timetable has been established for drawing up *(a)* regulations under the Fireworks Act 2003, *(b)* a media and public awareness strategy about the new regulations and *(c)* training for police and local authorities on dealing with the new regulations. [163373]

Mr. Sutcliffe: No formal timetable has been established, but under the Fireworks Act we have already made the Fireworks Regulations 2003 which came into force on 22 December.

Preliminary consultations on implementing the remainder of the Fireworks Act are continuing and draft regulations will be published for consultation towards the end of April with the aim of making regulations by July before summer recess.

A media and public awareness strategy is being considered. As far as possible, this will fit in with our annual firework safety campaign.

The Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (Lacors) ensure that local authorities have all relevant information and guidance relating to new legislation. Training for the police is a matter for the Home Office.

Flexiclub

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has received regarding the activities of the company Flexiclub; and if she will make a statement. [163227]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department does not comment on the affairs of individual companies. If the hon. Member has received complaints about a company called

Flexiclub or trading as Flexiclub we will consider it. According to information held at Companies House, companies with the words Flexiclub in their name have been dissolved, the most recent being in August 2002. We cannot investigate dissolved companies.

Internet Service Providers

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to promote an increase in internet service providers' accountability to their customers. [163431]

Mr. Timms: Under the Communications Act 2003, Ofcom was given a duty to set general conditions for service providers to provide information about services standards and customer rights. Under Ofcom's General Conditions of Entitlement, Internet service providers must provide a consumer code of practice that will set out clear information about the company they are dealing with, what they offer, what policies are in place (e.g. in relation to disconnections, payment, billing etc.), how to contact them, how to complain and how to go to an alternative dispute body.

The Communications Act 2003 also gave Ofcom a duty to promote media literacy. As part of Ofcom's strategy for the promotion of media literacy they will be encouraging Internet service providers to offer advice and guidance to customers, particularly in relation to the protection of young people from harmful content and services delivered on the Internet. In addition, Ofcom propose to direct people to information provided by other stakeholders when looking for information to control their and their children's activities online.

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken to encourage internet service providers to provide more information to their customers on the services they provide. [163432]

Mr. Timms: The regulation of Internet service providers is the responsibility of Ofcom. Under the Communications Act 2003 Ofcom have put in place a range of general conditions which improve the accountability of all communications providers, including ISPs, to their customers. For example all communications providers now have to establish alternative dispute resolution procedures for handling complaints made by their customers.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the *(a)* businesses and *(b)* small businesses which she has visited in an official capacity since 1 January. [162765]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* In my official capacity I frequently meet business people and also held regular meetings with business representative organisations.

Nirex

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 17 March 2004, *Official Report,* column 330W whether a representative of Nirex was present at the meetings of *(a)* 5 March and *(b)* 9 March; and whether the communications budget was discussed. [163047]

Mr. Timms: Nirex was not represented at these meetings, and they did not address its communications budget.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether applications from foreign candidates will be considered for the post of *(a)* chair and *(b)* chief executive of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. [163644]

Mr. Timms: The Department is undertaking a recruitment campaign for two policy advisers who subject to the successful passage of the Energy Bill be appointed Chair, and Chief Executive of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. The campaign is open and transparent and applications will be considered from all sources. The key requirement is that candidates meet the criteria for the posts. Successful candidates will need to obtain satisfactory security clearance.

Oil Reserves

Mr. Blunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment she has made of the importance of the Al-Ghawar oil field to the global oil market; [163400]

(2) what assessment she has made of the risks to sustaining output from the Al-Ghawar field at current levels. [163401]

Mr. Timms: The Al-Ghawar oil field is estimated to have production capacity of around five million barrels of oil per day, approximately 6 per cent. of global oil production.

My Department keeps abreast of the various studies looking at the sustainability of output from Al-Ghawar, and Saudi Arabia more generally. Although production from the Al-Ghawar field may slowly decline in future years, Saudi Aramco is confident that replacements from other giant oil fields mean that oil production from Saudi Arabia can be sustained at current levels, and higher if necessary, for several decades.

Mr. Blunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of short to medium term excess of oil and over-supply for oil on policy towards promoting development of more North Sea hydrocarbon resources. [163402]

Mr. Timms: The imperative to maximise the economic benefit, and the consequent contribution to energy security of supply, from the UK's oil and gas reserves applies whatever the oil price. Working with PILOT, the Government-industry forum, we aim to ensure that the North Sea's oil and gas reserves are fully exploited, for example by attracting new entrant oil companies and improving the recovery from existing fields.

Phoenix Development Fund

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the effect of the Phoenix Development Fund on levels of enterprise in disadvantaged and under-represented groups. [163319]

Nigel Griffiths: The Fund is currently being evaluated and a final report is due in September 2004. However the results to date indicate that the project is helping in the creation of some 8,000 new enterprises and assisting over 8,200 existing businesses.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much her Department has spent on grants to encourage the use of renewable energy in each year since 1990. [162054]

Mr. Timms: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that I gave to my right hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West and Royton (Mr. Meacher) on 17 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 327–28W.

Rural Post Offices (Scotland)

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discrete criteria are to be employed for Scotland as far as the review of the rural post office network is concerned. [162948]

Mr. Timms: Officials from the Scotland Office and the Scottish Executive will be closely involved in the consideration of policy options for the future of the rural post office network through membership on an inter-departmental working group.

Small Businesses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which of the recommendations of the Cross Cutting Review of Government Services for Small Businesses have been implemented. [163321]

Nigel Griffiths: 37 of 39 recommendations of the Cross Cutting Review of Government Services for Small Business have been or are being implemented, either in their original form, or as modified in the light of subsequent work. The 39 recommendations are set out in the following list.

Recommendation 22 in the list is not being pursued in its original form. Recommendation 23 has been deferred. Work has shown that it is not possible at this stage to develop an appropriate appraisal methodology to take full account of the costs to SMEs of different forms of service delivery.

Recommendations from the Cross Cutting Review of Government Services for Small Business

1. Government Departments to train staff in contact with small firms about the Government's objective of encouraging entrepreneurs: staff should be aware of the support and services available for new firms; this training should be sensitive to regional differences in rates of entrepreneurship.

2. Government 'services' aimed at fostering entrepreneurs should be more consciously designed to help remove barriers for under-represented groups; SBS to lead work on this.

3. SBS should bring forward proposals to increase the reach and effectiveness of the Small Firms Guarantee scheme provided the changes can demonstrate value for money, to implement the broad thrust of SBIT and KPMG recommendations, in particular that:

where possible, sector exclusions are removed;

the scheme is simplified; and that

it is marketed effectively to encourage greater take-up by finance providers and small businesses alike.

4. SBS should act as a focal point for Government research on barriers to enterprise for under-represented groups.

5. SBS to give clearer instructions to Business Links Operators (BLOs) on how to acknowledge diversity in their business delivery and ensure best practice in delivering BLO services are spread to all.

6. SBS to redefine BLOs targets to encourage them to engage the local community, creating an inclusive and approachable reputation, and using intermediaries where these are better at providing business services to specific groups.

7. RDAs should work with Local Strategic Partnerships, using regeneration funds where relevant, to pioneer novel approaches to barriers for specific groups of local entrepreneurs.

8. SBS and Inland Revenue jointly should examine the costs and benefits of providing, in a suitably anonymised form, to Government Departments and expert organisations, on an ongoing basis, existing data available from self-employment registration forms (Annex C).

9. The SBS and ONS should review the questions on self-employment and business ownership in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) to ensure that all self-employed interviewees are captured in the survey, and to examine increasing the LFS sample size.

10. SBS and Inland Revenue should examine and report to Ministers whether data on gender, ethnic background and disability status of applicants by postcode could be captured from self-employment registration forms.

11. SBS and Customs and Excise should examine and report to Ministers whether data on gender, ethnic background and disability status of applicants by postcode could be captured via the VAT registration form.

12. SBS to enforce the BLO contract condition to supply data on the clients receiving 'significant' assistance from Business Links.

13. Government Departments to identify separate services which could be combined to provide a single service for small firms—for example, at start-up, or becoming an employer.

14. Departments to set targets which demonstrate progress towards providing quality services for all customers.

15. SBS and the Office of the e-Envoy, to establish management and governance arrangement for business.gov to ensure that it is developed in conjunction with the main public services for small business; and also will ensure that departments and

agencies can base their electronic service delivery projects on a common, practical, research-based understanding of customer requirements, leading to a common look and feel for government information for small firms.

16. Departments and agencies who are service providers for small firms at start-up are to work with SBS to produce a resource pack with comprehensive information about what Government wants from new businesses and the newly self-employed and what it can do for them; the pack should be available through multiple private and public sector channels (including banks, accountants, libraries and so on). Local authority information should be incorporated as soon as possible.

17. Local enterprise events to be held: these give new and would-be entrepreneurs information about the help available (which they often underestimate).

18. Over time an electronic version of the resource pack to be developed to give more detailed and tailored information.

19. The pack will be underpinned by a common data source available to all issuing it, so that the same advice is given regardless of the agent who gives it.

20. OPSR (Cabinet Office) with support from PSPPU to develop guidance on customer-focused delivery and consult widely on their proposals.

21. SBS to develop further its expertise on small firm sector, to act as a proxy-customer and advise departments and agencies on the needs of small firms in designing and implementing policies which impact on them.

22. To raise awareness and promote culture change, SBS to sponsor a 'special award' for services to small firms within the existing Charter Mark Scheme, with applications judged by a panel comprising small firm representative groups and individual small businesses.

23. Departments to work with HM Treasury in developing further appraisal methodologies which take full account of the costs to SMEs of different forms of service delivery.

24. Departments' targets for measuring towards providing quality services for all customers, should also measure the extent to which the department has set the customer at the heart of its policy and implementation systems.

25. Whitehall Group to act as a forum to share best practice and ensure that opportunities for joint working that would benefit small firms customer are exploited.

26. Expenditure and service information to be collected again by SBS and HMT before the next spending review.

27. SBS to develop and maintain an information quarry on Government requirements of and support for small firms, available for other departments and small firms' advisers.

28. Departments with extensive contacts with small firms to train staff to use the information quarry to signpost small firms to other relevant Government services.

29. Departments and agencies with call centres to review operational targets to ensure these do not discourage effective signposting.

30. As an executive agency of the DTI, the SBS's remit is redefined to take account of the importance of small firms' wider interactions with Government: it should aim to simplify and improve small firms' experience of Government.

31. SBS should develop its role as a source of market knowledge and expertise on small firms for national policy makers through its research and evaluation programme and through existing and newly developing networks.

32. The joint chairman of a group of departments and agencies who provide major services for small firms should be a member of the SBS steering board; the group will advise on SBS's annual work programme to improve the quality and flow of information about Government services; the group will also be a forum for sharing good practice in customer focus.

33. RDAs and SBS should develop a methodology, so that SBS can build up an aggregate picture of demand and supply for information on services for small business.

34. SBS should continue to develop the brokerage role for Business Links.

35. RDAs should work closely with sub-regional partnerships, and Local Strategic Partnerships to share information with small businesses and improve local communication about services for small business.

36. SBS, RDAs and partnerships should develop principles of good partnership working.

37. Members of partnerships may adjust their own services in the light of information about what others do, to eliminate overlapping services or fill gaps.

38. RDAs may wish to give sub regional partnerships budgets for improving information for small firms about what is available; and/or to move from information sharing and provision to positive planning and co-ordination of services.

39. Members of partnerships should also identify any barriers to joint working created by national policies and targets, and pass this information back to the department or agency concerned via the RDA.

TRANSPORT

10-year Plan

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made *(a)* in Greater London and *(b)* in each London borough in achieving the 10-Year Plan targets for growth of more than 12 per cent. by 2010 compared with 2000 in the use of (i) bus services and (ii) light rail. [162350]

Mr. McNulty: The combined patronage total of bus and light rail has increased by 13.6 per cent. in the last two years in Greater London.

Bus patronage in Greater London has increased by 13.3 per cent. from 1,354 million journeys in 2000–01—the base year for the Government's 10-Year Plan target—to 1,534 million journeys in 2002–3. No data is available from TfL on the breakdown by London borough of this bus patronage increase.

Total Light Rail patronage in Greater London has also increased by 20.6 per cent. over this period. Annual patronage on the DLR network—which covers the boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Greenwich, Lewisham and Newham and the Corporation of London—has increased from 38.4 to 45.7 million journeys, an increase of 19 per cent., while annual patronage on the Croydon Tramlink—which covers the boroughs of Merton, Sutton, Croydon and Bromley—has increased from 15.0 to 18.7 million journeys, an increase of 24.7 per cent.

Bus Services

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Transport Commissioners have been consulted on the closure of Stroud bus station. [162827]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 23 March 2004]*: There is no formal requirement for Traffic Commissioners to be consulted regarding bus stations.

Channel Tunnel

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what total amount of public funds has been spent on the Channel Tunnel and associated works since 1986; and what assessment he has made of the economic stability of the Tunnel in the future. [161696]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 17 March 2004]*: No public funds have been spent on the Channel Tunnel itself. The Treaty of Canterbury, signed on 12 February 1986, specifically prohibits any public finance for this infrastructure. The connecting road and rail infrastructure has been developed with Government support. However, in the UK the bulk of this is in the form of guaranteed bonds.

While the Government is keen to see maximum usage of the Tunnel infrastructure, the economic foundation of the operating company is ultimately a matter for its shareholders.

Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many cases of computer misuse there were in his Department and its predecessor in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003, broken down by category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [163274]

Mr. McNulty: There have been no proven incidents of computer misuse in the Department for Transport and its predecessor in 1997 and two in 2003.

In 2003, following disciplinary action, one member of staff was dismissed from the Department because of misuse of computer equipment involving access to "inappropriate" websites.

During the same year disciplinary action was taken against another member of staff who was dismissed for gross misconduct on several different counts. One being interpreted as serious negligence, causing unacceptable loss of a computer laptop.

Cycling Proficiency Tests

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many cycling proficiency tests have been *(a)* taken and *(b)* passed in each year since 1997, (i) in total and (ii) broken down by local authority; [163115]

(2) what financial support has been given from his Department to local authorities for *(a)* cycling proficiency testing and *(b)* other bicycle training (i) in total and (ii) broken down by local authority. [163116]

Mr. Jamieson: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 24 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 339–40W.

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what research has been conducted into the safety implications of *(a)* the cycling proficiency test and *(b)* other bicycle training; [163117]

(2) what recent changes have been made, and what changes are proposed, to *(a)* the cycling proficiency test and *(b)* other bicycle training. [163118]

Mr. Jamieson: The Transport Research Laboratory's Research Project Report 214, "The Effectiveness of Child Cycle Training Schemes" has shown that cycle training is effective, with trained children found to be significantly safer than untrained children when knowledge and skills were tested two years after training. The research also identified that better performing cycling schemes involve on-road training, staged courses spread out over a number of weeks, and a problem solving or cycling awareness approach to learning.

There is no longer a single official cycle proficiency test. Local authorities adopt different practices when running cycle training schemes according to how they believe they can best deliver safer cycling locally. But we understand that many local authorities currently base their cycle training on the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents' guidelines for the management and operation of practical cyclist training schemes.

The Department is currently working with the National Cycling Strategy Board for England to develop a comprehensive promotion of cycling to school. This involves a close look at current cycle training provision; developing a national standard for child cycle training with road safety organisations, cycle trainers and cycling organisations.

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many qualified bicycle trainers there were in each year since 1997. [163120]

Mr. Jamieson: There is no centrally held data on the numbers of cycle trainers.

Infrastructure Projects

Mr. Collins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the major transport infrastructure projects within the responsibility of his Department to be built in *(a)* Aberdeen Central, i Alyn and Deeside, *(c)* Ayr, *(d)* Bassetlaw, *(e)* Birmingham, Northfield, *(f)* Birmingham, Perry Barr, *(g)* Blaydon, *(h)* Blyth Valley, *(i)* Bootle, *(j)* Bradford West, *(k)* Braintree, *(l)* Burton, *(m)* Cardiff West, *(n)* Clwyd South,

(o) Conwy, *(p)* Coventry North West, *(q)* Coventry South, *(r)* Clydebank and Milngavie, *(s)* Cynon Valley, *(t)* Dover, *(u)* Ealing North, *(v)* Eltham, *(w)* Feltham and Heston, *(x)* Forest of Dean, *(y)* Gateshead East and Washington West, *(z)* Glasgow, Govan, (aa) Glasgow, Maryhill, (bb) Hammersmith and Fulham, (cc) Hendon, (dd) Hornsey and Wood Green, (ee) Ilford North, (ff) Kettering, (gg) Knowsley South, (hh) Lancaster and Wyre, (ii) Leeds North East, (jj) Leeds West, (kk) Leicester East, (ll) Lewisham, Deptford, (mm) Liverpool, Riverside, (nn) Loughborough, (oo) Manchester, Withington, (pp) Milton Keynes North East, (qq) Monmouth, (rr) Northampton South, (ss) North West Leicestershire, (tt) Ochil, (uu) Reading East, (vv) Reading West, (ww) Rugby and Kenilworth, (xx) Sheffield, Attercliffe, (yy) Sheffield, Hillsborough, (zz) Sittingbourne and Sheppey, (aaa) Stevenage, (bbb) Stockton North, (ccc) Stoke-on-Trent, (ddd) Stourbridge, (eee) Thurrock, (fff) Tyne Bridge, (ggg) Wallasey, (hhh) Wansbeck, (iii) Waveney, (jjj) West Lancashire, (kkk) Wirral West, (lll) Wolverhampton North East and (mmm) Wolverhampton South East; and when the decision was taken to build them. [153777]

Mr. McNulty: The following major transport infrastructure projects within the responsibility of my Department are currently planned, or are being built, in these constituencies as shown in the following table. Many of these projects, for example the West Coast Main Line modernisation, by their very nature benefit a number of constituencies and also benefit people living in many other constituencies.

Constituency	*Project*	*Decision date*
Alyn and Deeside	West Coast Main Line Modernisation—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	June 1998
Bassetlaw	A1 Peterborough to Blythe Grade Separated Junction.	March 2001[1]
Birmingham Northfield	Highway Maintenance PFI Scheme—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	October 2003
	Northfield Relief Bypass	December 2000 PA[2]
Birmingham Perry Barr	Highway Maintenance PFI Scheme—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	October 2003
	Outer Circle Bus Showcase—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2000
Bradford West	Yorkshire Yellow School buses—This scheme benefits constituencies across its area of operation and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2003
	Yorcard Integrated Public Transport Smartcard—This scheme benefits constituencies across its area of operation and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2003 PA
Braintree	Felixstowe to Nuneaton Rail Gauge Enhancement—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	26 February 2003
Conwy	West Coast Main Line Modernisation—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	June 1998
Coventry North West	Coventry Quality Bus Network—This scheme benefits constituencies across its area of operation and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2003 PA 1996
	West Coast Main Line Modernisation—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	June 1998
Coventry South	Coventry Quality Bus Network—This scheme benefits constituencies across its area of operation and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2003 PA
	A45 / A46 Tollbar End Improvement—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	April 2003[3]
	West Coast Main Line Modernisation—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	June 1998
Dover	Southern Region Rail Power Supply Upgrade Project—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	Early 2002
Ealing North	Streetlighting PFI schemes	Project Review Group[4] decision 19/8/04
	LU PFI Prestige (Oyster-smart travel cards)	August 1998
	LU PFI Power (power supply)	August 1998
	LU PFI Connect (radio and communications systems)	November 1999
	LU PPP financial close Tube Lines	December 2002
	LU PPP Metronet	April 2003
	These schemes benefit the entire London Underground network and are not specific to this constituency.	March 1999
Eltham	Southern Region Rail Power Supply Upgrade Project—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	Early 2002
Feltham and Heston	Southern Region Rail Power Supply Upgrade Project—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	Early 2002
	LU PFI Prestige (Oyster-smart travel cards)—This scheme benefits the entire London Underground network and is not specific to this constituency.	August 1998

Constituency	Project	Decision date
Hammersmith and Fulham	LU PFI Prestige (Oyster-smart travel cards)	August 1998
	LU PFI Power (power supply)	August 1998
	LU PFI Connect (radio and communications systems)	November 1999
	LU PPP financial close Tube Lines	December 2002
	LU PPP Metronet	April 2003
	LU PFI BTP accommodation.	March 1999
	These schemes benefit the entire London Underground network and are not specific to this constituency.	
Hendon	LU PFI Prestige (Oyster-smart travel cards)	August 1998
	LU PFI Power (power supply)	August 1998
	LU PFI Connect (radio and communications systems)	November 1999
	LU PPP financial close Tube Lines	December 2002
	LU PPP Metronet	April 2003
	LU PFI BTP accommodation.	March 1999
	These schemes benefit the entire London Underground network and are not specific to this constituency.	
Hornsey and Wood Green	LU PFI Prestige (Oyster-smart travel cards)	August 1998
	LU PFI Power (power supply)	August 1998
	LU PFI Connect (radio and communications systems)	November 1999
	LU PPP financial close Tube Lines	December 2002
	LU PPP Metronet	April 2003
	LU PFI BTP accommodation.	March 1999
	These schemes benefit the entire London Underground network and are not specific to this constituency	
Ilford North	LU PFI Prestige (Oyster-smart travel cards)—This scheme benefits the entire London Underground network and is not specific to this constituency.	August 1998
Kettering	Corby Link Road (borders Kettering Constituency)—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	2002 PA 2003 PA
	Isham Bypass—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	2003 PA
Knowsley South	M62 Junction 6	March 2001[5]
	Merseytram Line 1 (Light Rail)—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2002
Lancaster and Wyre	West Coast Main Line Modernisation—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	June 1998
Leeds North East	Yorcard Integrated Public Transport Smartcard—This scheme benefits constituencies across its area of operation and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2003 PA
Leeds West	Yorcard Integrated Public Transport Smartcard—This scheme benefits constituencies across its area of operation and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2003 PA
Leicester East	Upperton Road Viaduct Maintenance Scheme	2003 PA
Lewisham Deptford	East London Line Extension	2001
	LU PFI Prestige (Oyster-smart travel cards) LU PFI Power (power supply)	August 1998
	LU PFI Connect (radio and communications systems)	August 1998
	LU PPP financial close Tube Lines	November 1999
	LU PPP Metronet	December 2002
	LU PFI BTP accommodation	April 2003
	These schemes benefit the entire London Underground network and are not specific to this constituency	March 1999
	Southern Region Rail Power Supply Upgrade Project— This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	Early 2002
Liverpool Riverside	Merseytram Line 1 (Light Rail)—This scheme benefits constituencies across its area of operation and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2002
Manchester Withington	Manchester Urban Traffic Control—This scheme benefits constituencies across its area of operation and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2000
	South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy (SEMMMS)—Quality Bus Corridor—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is. not specific to this constituency.	August 2003
Milton Keynes North East	Central Milton Keynes Public Transport Access Improvements—This scheme benefits constituencies across its area of operation and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2003 PA
	Integrated Transport Scheme—Bus Network—This scheme benefits constituencies across its area of operation and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2000 PA
	West Coast Main Line Modernisation—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	June 1998
Northampton South	West Coast Main Line Modernisation—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	June 1998
	Quality Bus Network—This scheme benefits constituencies across its area of operation and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2003

Constituency	Project	Decision date
Reading East	M4 Junction 11 (Green Park)	2001 PA
Reading West	M4 Junction 11 (Green Park)	2001 PA
Rugby and Kenilworth	Rugby Western Bypass—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2000 PA April 2003[6] February 2003[7] June 1998
	A45/A46 Tollbar End Improvement—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	April 2003[6]
	M1 Junction 19	February 2003[7]
	West Coast Main Line Modernisation—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	June 1998
Sheffield Attercliffe	Yorcard Integrated Public Transport Smartcard—This scheme benefits constituencies across its area of operation and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2003 PA
Sheffield Hillsborough	Yorcard Integrated Public Transport Smartcard—This scheme benefits constituencies across its area of operation and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2003 PA
Sittingbourne and Sheppey	Southern Region Rail Power Supply Upgrade Project—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	Early 2002
Stockton North	South Stockton Link Road—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	December 1999
Stoke-on-Trent Central	West Coast Main Line Modernisation—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	June 1998
Stoke-on-Trent North	West Coast Main Line Modernisation—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	June 1998
Stoke-on-Trent South	West Coast Main Line Modernisation—This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	June 1998
Thurrock	West Thurrock Regeneration Route (Phase 1)	February 2003
	Felixstowe to Nuneaton Rail Gauge Enhancement, London Route— This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	26 February 2003
Tyne Bridge	Centrelink (Public Transport Scheme)	December 2000
	Quayside Public Transport	December 2000
	Central Motorway East (A167M)— This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	2000
Wansbeck	Al Morpeth to Felton Dualling— This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	July 2003[8]
Waveney	South Lowestoft Relief Road— This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	2000 PA
Wolverhampton North East	Wolverhampton Centre Access and Integrated Transport Interchange— This scheme benefits nearby constituencies and is not specific to this constituency	December 2000 PA
	West Coast Main Line Modernisation— This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	June 1998
Wolverhampton South East	Wolverhampton Centre Access and Integrated Transport Interchange— This scheme benefits nearby constituencies and is not specific to this constituency.	December 2000 PA
	West Coast Main Line Modernisation— This scheme benefits constituencies along its entire route and is not specific to this constituency.	June 1998

[1] Date entered the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvements
[2] PA-Provisionally Approved and subject to completion of the relevant statutory procedures and final approval by Ministers
[3] Date entered the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvements
[4] Project Review Group (PRG)-a treasury led interdepartmental group that takes decisions on the suitability of schemes for PFI.
[5] Date entered the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvements
[6] Date entered the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvements
[7] Date entered the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvements
[8] Date entered the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvements

Notes:

1. Major projects are taken to be those with a capital cost of £5 million or over.
2. This answer does not cover any transport matters devolved to the Scottish Parliament or the National Assembly for Wales.
3. Unless stated otherwise, the "decision date" is the date when the decision to fund was taken.
4. The list has been compiled on the basis that the project or its route is physically located in the relevant constituency. However, some complex projects such as West Coast Main Line Modernisation and Channel Tunnel Rail Link will benefit many nearby constituencies. Thus, the following constituencies will be beneficiaries of the projects listed:

West Coast Main Line Modernisation
Bootle
Clydebank & Milngavie
Glasgow Govan
Glasgow Maryhill

Liverpool Riverside
Manchester Withington
Wallasey
West Lancashire
Wirral West
Sittingbourne and Sheppey
CTRL

5. There are no major infrastructure transport projects within the responsibility of my Department relevant to the following constituencies:

Aberdeen Central
Ayr
Blaydon
Blyth Valley
Bootle
Burton
Cardiff West
Clwyd South
Clydebank and Milngavie
Cynon Valley
Cynon Valley
Forest of Dean
Glasgow Govan
Glasgow Maryhill
Loughborough
Monmouth
North West Leicestershire
Ochil
Stevenage
Stourbridge
Wallasey
West Lancashire
Wirral West

London Transport (Grants)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what grants were made available to *(a)* the Greater London Authority, *(b)* Transport for London, and *(c)* each London borough from his Department in each of the last four financial years. [163060]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport has provided the following level of funding for Transport for London (TfL) through the GLA Transport Grant over the last four years:

£ million

	GLA Transport Grant
2000–01[1]	396.161
2001–02	720.053
2002–03	1,024.118
2003–04[2]	1,681.932

[1] ncludes funding for TfL's predecessor bodies in 2000–01 before the creation of TfL in July 2000. A further £95m of credit approvals were issued by the Government Office for London to London Boroughs for transport capital projects in 2000–01; such support was issued as grant to boroughs by TfL in subsequent years.

[2] nly includes funding for London Underground following its transfer to TfL in July 2003. Before then £872 million grant had been paid for 2003–04.

The Department has not provided any direct funding to London boroughs for transport improvements following the creation of TfL, which is now responsible for allocating borough capital funding. Boroughs, however, do use some of their Revenue Support Grant allocation from the Office of Deputy Prime Minister to fund routine highway maintenance works, concessionary fare provision, and other local transport planning and management activities.

M25

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the hold-up of traffic flows on the M25 consequent on the accident in the vicinity of junctions 29 and 31 on 17 March, with particular reference to *(a)* the length in miles of the hold-up at its peak and *(b)* the duration of the hold-up; and what actions were taken by the (i) Highways Agency and (ii) Essex and Kent Police (A) to advise motorists of the hold-up and (B) to ameliorate the delay and congestion, broken down by time. [163256]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 23 March 2004]*: There were severe delays and inconvenience caused to motorists as a result of the fatal accident that occurred on the M25 between Junctions 29 and 30 on Wednesday 17 March.

The Highways Agency and the emergency services are urgently carrying out a thorough investigation into this incident and accident management. As soon as the report's findings are known, the relevant information will be forwarded to my hon. Friend and copies placed in the Libraries of the House.

Motorised Scooters/Wheelchairs

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) for what reasons electric-powered wheelchairs are restricted to a maximum speed of 8 mph when being used on a road; and if he will make a statement; [162916]

(2) if he will amend the Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988 to bring the maximum speed permitted thereunder into line with the maximum speed permitted for electric bicycles under The Motor Cycles, Etc (EC type approval) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 (S.I.1099/2003). [163175]

Dr. Howells: Powered wheelchairs and powered scooters are designed to provide independent mobility for people with a physical disability. Their use is governed by The Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988 (SI 1988 No.2268). There are two classes of powered vehicle: class 2 vehicles are restricted to 4 mph (6.4 kph) and are designed to be used on footways; class 3 vehicles are restricted to 4 mph (6.4 kph) on the footway and 8mph (12.8kph) on the carriageway.

The vehicles are treated for the purposes of the Road Traffic Act as not being motor vehicles and are, therefore, outside the scope of most requirements of road vehicle construction regulations. Users do not need a driving licence and are not subject to a test.

The speed of 8 mph (12.8 kph) was set following consultation with disability organisations, industry and road safety groups and was intended to provide a balance between the needs of the users for local outdoor mobility and road safety concerns both for the users and for others on the road. We are currently reviewing the regulations and we will be holding a wide-ranging consultation later this year on a range of issues including speed limits.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 18 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 405W, on motorised scooters, what research his Department has commissioned on deaths and injuries involving Class 2 and Class 3 invalid carriages. [163843]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport has commissioned research as part of a major review of the legislation governing the use of Class 2 and Class 3 invalid carriages on the highway. The first stage of the research is to estimate the numbers of these vehicles that are being used and to find out how many accidents or incidents there are involving them. This stage of the work should be completed shortly.

Press Officers

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many press officers were employed in his Department in each year from 1990–91 to 2003–04; what the total cost was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [162847]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Truro and St. Austell (Matthew Taylor) on 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1410W, that provided information for the financial year 2003–04.

In 2002–03 there was an average of 12.7 full time equivalent (fte) press officers employed with related salary costs of £0.51 million in DfT(C), covering the 10 month period from the creation of the Department in late May 2002.

Information for each of the financial years between 1997–2002, when transport policy formed part of the remit of the former Departments' of Environment, Transport and the Regions and Transport, Local Government and the Regions, is not available in a comparable format.

Detailed information on the numbers of permanent press officers employed in departmental press offices, including the former Department of Transport (DoT) for the financial year 1996–97, was provided in a memorandum dated 16 June 1998 to the Select Committee on Public Administration and published in its report on the Government Information and Communication Service (HC 770) in July 1998 (http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmpubadm/770/77002.htm).

Comparable staffing figures for the former DoT (central) between 1993–94 to 1995–96 are:

	Number
1995–96	20
1994–95	17
1993–94	19

The salary costs of these staff can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Comparable information for earlier years is not available.

Rail Services/Stations

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of trains to Portsmouth Harbour from *(a)* London Waterloo, *(b)* London Victoria and *(c)* Southampton and the west (i) arrived within five minutes of their advertised arrival time and (ii) terminated before reaching Portsmouth Harbour in the last (A) month and (B) 12 month period for which information is available. [163539]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested is not collated centrally in the format required.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is on the maintenance of the timetabled rail service between London Waterloo and Shanklin. [163540]

Mr. McNulty: Responsibility for the provision of train services, to timetable, is for the train operating companies.

Where more than one train operating company provide elements of a journey, as is the case between London Waterloo and Shanklin, it is the responsibility of each train operating company to ensure that their services run to the timetable for their element of the journey.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers he has with respect to the re-opening of railway stations in Scotland. [162945]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority is responsible for the strategic development and funding of the national rail network, including the Scottish network. The Scottish Executive may facilitate the development and improvement of Scottish passenger rail services, including station re-openings and the provision of new stations.

Road Noise

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) which concrete trunk roads have been resurfaced with low noise materials, broken down by cost of each project; [162578]

(2) how much funding has been allocated to resurface concrete trunk roads with low noise materials *(a)* in each year since the projects started and *(b)* for 2003–04. [162584]

Mr. Jamieson: In year funding is not specifically allocated for resurfacing of concrete trunk roads with low noise materials. The following concrete trunk roads have been resurfaced with low noise materials and broken down by the cost of each project and the year of completion.

Concrete sections completed in	*M20*	*Cost (£ million)*
1999–2000	J3-J5	7.5
2000–01	J9-J10	6.0
2001–02	No schemes completed	No schemes completed

Concrete sections completed in 2002–03	*Cost (£ million)*
M1 80: Junction 2 to Beltoft	2.3
A12 Brentwood Bypass Phase 2	12.8
M11 Junction 8 (Stansted Slip Road Contract)	3.7
M20J11—Sellindge	7.4
M20 Sellindge—Smeeth	—
M27 Junctions 2–3	19.1
M27 Junctions 3–4	—
M11 J7–6 Southbound	3.2
M5 Junctions 26 to 27 Contract 1	1.6
Sub total	50.1

Concrete sections completed in 2003–04	*Cost (£ million)*
A1 Long Bennington	4.4
M42 Junctions 2–3a	7.4
M180 Sandtoft—Junction 2	4.0
M11 B1038 (Newport)—All	10.9
M1 Junctions 1–2	6.9
M20 Junctions 11a-11	7.8
M20 Junctions 13–11a	—
M25 J26–27	14.3
M5 Junctions 26 to 27 Contract 2	3.7
M5 J27 South to Willand	4.9
A12 Witham-Kelvedon	13.7
Sub total	78.0

M20 J11 to Sellindge and M20 Sellindge to Smeeth schemes were delivered as one project. The same applies to M20 Junctions 11a to 11 and M20 Junctions 13 to 11a schemes and the M27 Junctions 2 to 3 and M27 Junctions 3 to 4.

The Highways Agency has reported the following allocated expenditure for concrete trunk roads resurfacing with low noise materials since 1999:

	£ million
1999–2000	7.5
2000–01	6
2001–02	0.7
2002–03	51.4
2003–04	76

Secondments

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the secondees from outside organisations working in his Department, stating in each case *(a)* the name of the person, *(b)* the name of the organisation, *(c)* the post held and *(d)* the start and finish dates of the secondment; and which are involved in drafting Parliamentary Answers. [158048]

Mr. McNulty: There are four secondees from external organisations currently working in DfT, as follows:

	Name (a)			
	Bruce Coombs	*Adrian Sayce*	*Nick Joyce*	*Clive Wood*
Grade	7	7	SCS	7
Band	6.1	6.1	SCSPB 1	6.1
Organisation *(b)*	Civil Aviation Authority	Civil Aviation Authority	Ernst & Young	Nottingham County Council
Host	CAD-Air Traffic Division	Multilateral Division	Transport Finance Directorate	Traffic Management Unit
Post held *(c)*	Head of Branch	Representative to ICAO	Assistant to Corporate Finance Advisor	Secondee
Start *(d)*	26 June 2001	9 December 2002	19 January 2004	12 January 2004
End *(d)*	25 June 2004	9 December 2005	January 2005	July 2004

Note:
(d) All secondees are subject to the Civil Service Code of Conduct whilst on secondment and are expected to undertake the full range of duties attached to the post, including the provision of drafts for PQs if required. Every effort is taken to ensure that no conflict of interest occurs.

Speed Cameras

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the posted speed is of each fixed speed camera within a Safety Camera Partnership. [142266]

Mr. Jamieson: The information is not available in the form requested. However, the speed limits at the camera sites in the six English Safety Camera Partnerships involved in the two-year pilot evaluation of the Safety Camera Programme were as follows:

Speed limit at camera site (mph)	*Percentage of sites*
30	78.3
40	10.6
50	1.4
60	6.2
70	3.5
Total	100

The pilot areas were selected on the basis that they represented a good mix of demographics, enforcement experience and strategies. The spread of camera enforcement by speed limit is therefore likely to be indicative of the spread of speed limits at camera sites generally.

Further information will be available in the Three Year Report on the Safety Camera Programme, to be published shortly.

In setting the speed at which cameras operate, partnerships follow the Association of Chief Police Officers guidance that the minimum level should be the speed limit, plus 10 per cent., plus 2 mph.

Strategic Rail Authority

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff are employed in the Strategic Rail Authority; and what assessment he has made of the potential for cost savings. [162929]

Mr. McNulty: The SRA currently employs 426 staff, excluding those working for subsidiary organisations such as South East Trains. The review of the rail industry announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 19 January is looking into roles and responsibilities in the railway industry, including those of the SRA, and any scope for cost savings will be considered as part of the review.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animal By-Products Regulations

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what powers she has to prevent local authority officers enforcing the Animal By-Products Regulations in the absence of the introduction of the Fallen Stock Subscription Scheme. [158737]

Mr. Bradshaw: No such powers are available. However, Defra has requested that local authorities continue to take a pragmatic approach to enforcement in regard to the disposal of fallen stock.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what instructions or advice she has given local authority enforcement officers in respect of enforcement of the Animal By-Product Regulations and the disposal of fallen stock. [158738]

Mr. Bradshaw: Local authorities, through the LACORS website, have been made aware of the delay and the continuing request that they take a pragmatic approach to enforcement as stated in the news release issued by Defra on 24 February. In addition a letter is being sent to LACORS setting out the Government's guidance on enforcement and a copy is being placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she has notified the European Commission as to her instructions and advice to enforcement officers in respect of the enforcement of the Animal By-Products Regulations. [158740]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have notified the European Commission that we have provided guidance and initial training for enforcement bodies and that guidance and a large amount of information on the Animal By-Products Regulations is available on the Defra website.

Badgers

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how badger fecundity changes where food supplies are freely available, irrespective of population density. [158361]

Mr. Bradshaw: Badger fecundity is positively correlated with autumn body condition. In environments where food is plentiful, such as south and south-west England, a badger social group may produce several litters each year. Alternatively, in poorer environments, such as upland areas of Scotland, only one litter may be produced per social group per year.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether population stress in specific badger social groups triggers migration. [158365]

Mr. Bradshaw: Movements of badgers between social groups is a natural phenomenon. However, rates of movement may differ relative to population density, among other factors. It is generally believed that badgers move between social groups more frequently in lower density and disturbed populations.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the effects are on badger populations when changes in habitat occur which reduce the carrying capacity of the environment to a level below that of the existing population levels. [158377]

Mr. Bradshaw: No studies have been conducted that address this question.

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her best estimate is of the effect on the competitiveness of British dairy products compared with those of *(a)* Ireland, *(b)* France and *(c)* other European Union member states arising from the additional cost borne exclusively by UK farmers as a result of bovine TB. [158369]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are too many variables to be assessed, for instance, industry structures, fluctuation in /euro rates and uncertainty about the real economic effects of TB on the average dairy business in Great Britain, to allow for a realistic estimate of effects on competitiveness to be made.

The cost of TB to farmers in Great Britain is currently being assessed. Defra has commissioned Reading University to carry out research into the economic impacts of TB and alternative control policies in Great Britain. A report is expected shortly and a summary of the findings will be published on the Defra website in due course.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the findings from the Krebs reactive trials are sufficient to rule out the use of reactive culling on a larger scale than was undertaken during those trials. [158698]

Mr. Bradshaw: The result from the reactive areas of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial suggests that removal of badgers in the way it was carried out during the trial is ineffective in reducing the level of bovine TB in the cattle population. Reactive culling of badgers in this way, even on a larger scale, has therefore been ruled out as a policy option.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether there is a relationship between badger population density and the prevalence of TB in badger populations. [158716]

Mr. Bradshaw: Currently the only available data, to investigate the potential relationship between disease prevalence and badger population density, originates from the Central Science Laboratory's study at Woodchester Park. This suggests that the prevalence of infection in badgers has fluctuated widely and bears no simple linear relationship to badger density.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the difference in population growth rates is between *(a)* high, *(b)* medium and *(c)* low density badger populations; and what the primary factors responsible for the difference are. [158717]

Mr. Bradshaw: The growth rate of the badger population, as with any animal population is dependent upon a number of underlying ecological principles, and in particular the rates of births and deaths. A high density population may have little scope for growth, as it is likely to be near the capacity which that particular habitat can support, if the local habitat is poor for badgers then it may only be capable of supporting low numbers. However, if badgers are culled to a low level from a previously high density in a location where conditions are favourable, then there is likely to be considerable potential for population recovery.

Following removal of 11 social groups from a high density badger population in Gloucestershire, it took 10 years for numbers to recover to pre-cull levels (Cheeseman et al, 1993). Following incomplete removal of eight social groups in a lower density population also in Gloucestershire, density returned to pre-cull levels after only three years (Tuyttens et al, 2000). Recovery rates are likely to be dependent on the quality of the habitat, and the size of the badger population in the surrounding area from which immigration will occur.

Cheeseman et al, (1993) Recolonisation by badgers in Gloucestershire. In: Hayden, T.J. (Ed) *The badger*. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, pp. 78–93.

Tuyttens, F.A.M., et al. (2000) Spatial perturbation caused by a badger culling operation. *Journal of Animal Ecology*, 69, 815–828.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to what extent multiple administration of a TB detection test with low sensitivity improves the chances of detection of infection in an infected animal which has previously shown a negative response to that test. [158720]

Mr. Bradshaw: Any single test with imperfect sensitivity, when applied more than once to an infected animal, will cause the overall sensitivity of the procedure to rapidly approach 100 per cent., although the added value of extra tests will diminish substantially. The probability formula for the overall sensitivity of the multiple testing protocol is as follows:

$$\sum_{r=1}^{n} \alpha (1-\alpha)^{r-1}$$

Where *a* is the known sensitivity of a single test, n is the total number of tests carried out in the same animal and r ranges in value from 1 to n.

Notes:

This formula assumes:

1. conditional independence between test results (i.e. the sensitivity of one test does not affect the sensitivity of previous or subsequent tests in the same animal) and

2. that once an animal tests positive on any occasion it is considered to be infected and is not subjected to further testing.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is possible to identify visually individual badgers which are heavily infected by TB; whether it is possible to target those badgers for killing; and whether such a practice would have a significant impact on the incidence of TB in *(a)* badger and *(b)* cattle populations. [158723]

Mr. Bradshaw: Currently, the only sure way of determining the TB status of a badger is through post mortem examination. Even heavily infected individuals may show no outward sign of TB infection. It follows that it would not be possible to target such badgers effectively, and such a practice would be unlikely to have a significant effect on TB in badger or cattle populations.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Treasury on the costs of the TB control programme. [159059]

Mr. Bradshaw: Discussions are in progress with the Treasury in relation to Spending Review 2004 and expenditure on the TB control programme is a recognised element in those discussions.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she plans to reduce the costs of the TB control programme. [159060]

Mr. Bradshaw: A key challenge for Government in developing a new TB strategy is, in partnership with industry and others, to reduce the overall economic impact of TB and increase the cost-effectiveness of control measures.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the need for *(a)* vaccination of (i) cattle

and (ii) badgers and *(b)* other measures to control the incidence of TB in cattle herds in the absence of any significant wildlife reservoir of the disease. [159061]

Mr. Bradshaw: Evidence from other countries shows that, in the absence of a significant wildlife reservoir, cattle controls based on regular testing and slaughter, inspection at slaughterhouses, and movement restrictions (including tracing and contiguous testing) can be effective at controlling bovine TB without vaccination.

Any badger/wildlife management strategy (whether culling or vaccination) would need to be deployed in conjunction with cattle-based controls. However, practical application of potential vaccines for cattle or badgers remains a long-term prospect.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what cattle biosecurity measures were maintained during the Thornbury badger clearance programme. [159066]

Mr. Bradshaw: No enhanced biosecurity measures were maintained during the Thornbury badger clearance programme.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are undertaken by her Department in respect of animal sanctuaries and hospitals to ensure that the guidelines relating to the release of badgers into the wild are fully observed. [159069]

Mr. Bradshaw: None. As I have explained in previous answers these guidelines were prepared by animal welfare organisations and are voluntary. As they are not approved by the Department we do not seek to enforce their use.

Animal hospitals treating sick or injured badgers are not legally required to test animals for bovine tuberculosis before they are released from captivity.

To minimise the risk of animal hospitals accidentally spreading tuberculosis Defra facilitated development of the voluntary protocol for the rehabilitation and release of badgers. This was drawn up by the RSPCA, National Federation of Badgers Groups and Secret World Wildlife Rescue. The protocol provides comprehensive guidance on the precautions necessary to protect the welfare of badgers and critically, to minimise the risk of transmitting bovine tuberculosis.

The protocol is promoted by the organisations above and is available via the internet at: http://www.badger.org.uk/action/badger-rehabilitation-protocol-contents.html

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the change in premiums for bovine TB insurance policies since 1997. [159070]

Mr. Bradshaw: No such assessment has been made. Insurance companies will make their own decisions on whether to insure, and about the size of premiums, based on their assessment of the risk.

Contact between officials and the insurance industry early in 2003 indicated that, although companies are honouring existing policies, they are not offering new policies to cover TB in cattle herds, particularly in areas where TB is increasingly prevalent. This is because farmers do not wish to take the cover in areas where the risk is low (such as Yorkshire), but do wish to purchase cover in areas of high incidence (such as the South West). However, the insurance companies considered that the financial risks in offering insurance policies in areas of high incidence were too high at that time.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the measures necessary to restore health to the national badger population. [159071]

Mr. Bradshaw: None.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will determine the optimum population of badgers for each county area, having regard to the effect of high badger densities on *(a)* property, *(b)* wildlife and *(c)* the incidence of TB. [159076]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government expect the badger to remain a common species, but do not have views on the optimum badger population level, nationally or regionally.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of the total hours expended by field officers engaged on randomised badger culling trials were absorbed by travelling time. [159079]

Mr. Bradshaw: Individual elements of the field trial including such overheads are not individually quantifiable, as a work recording scheme is not operational. However, in 2003 approximately 1,130,000 miles were driven in WLU official vehicles, which roughly equates to between 2 and 3 hours driving per day per person.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what epidemiological value data on the seasonal incidence of TB in cattle has in determining possible causation. [159080]

Mr. Bradshaw: TB surveillance in GB relies particularly on tuberculin skin testing and meat inspection at the slaughterhouse. Neither of these methods allows a precise ascertainment of when new infection occurred. This is compounded by the nature of TB which is a chronic disease with a highly variable incubation period. If it were possible to determine the time of infection with any certainty, this information would, in some circumstances, help inform the source of infection.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* received on chemical deterrents which may be used to protect buildings or other structures from badger ingress. [159081]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food commissioned research in the 1990s on the use of odour repellents that could potentially be used to protect buildings and other structures. The Department is currently considering commissioning new work on this topic. Information on chemical deterrents research is received at intervals as part of normal day-to-day business.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* incidence and *(b)* prevalence of bovine TB in the South West of England was in 1994; and what the current figures are. [159082]

Mr. Bradshaw: A comparison of the incidence of bovine TB in the South West of England in 1994 and 2003 is given in the following table.

Table: Incidence of TB in South West England

	1994 South West[1]	*2003 West Region*[2] *(provisional data)*
Total number of TB Herd tests	11,948	19,910
Total new herd TB incidents[3]	648	2,035
Total confirmed new incidents (CNIs)[4]	274	1,053
Incidence[5] (Percentage)	2.29	5.29

[1] *Source:* The Report of the Chief Veterinary Officer 1994. The area covered by the figures may not exactly correspond to the 2003 West Region.

[2] Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Avon, Wiltshire, Hereford and Worcester and Shropshire.

[3] A TB incident is one where at least one reactor is disclosed at the TB test.

[4] A confirmed incident is one where disease is confirmed by finding visible lesions at post mortem examination or *M. bovis* is cultured in the laboratory.

[5] For the purpose of comparing data from 1994 with 2003, incidence is defined as percentage of herds tested that result in CNIs. A better definition would be the percentage of unrestricted herds tested that result in a CNI, but the figures for tests on unrestricted herds are not available for 1994.

We have no reliable or certain measure of prevalence, which is defined in the Krebs Report as "the proportion of a population infected at any one time".

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to what extent cattle husbandry creates conditions favourable to colonisation of the habitat by badgers. [159084]

Mr. Bradshaw: Many features of the cattle farming landscape are beneficial to badgers. For example, permanent pasture provides ideal habitat for badgers to forage for earthworms, and farm woodlands and hedgerows provide cover for their setts. Furthermore, cattle feed may provide alternative nutrition for badgers when natural foods are unavailable. This is most likely where cattle feed is either put out on pasture or stored in insecure facilities.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discretion directors of veterinary investigation laboratories have to authorise the post mortem examination of badgers for the presence of TB when presented to their laboratories by a private individual. [159109]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Veterinary Surveillance Department of the VLA, in consultation with Defra, has issued formal instructions to the VLA Regional Laboratories that allow them to carry out post mortem examinations on badgers and other wildlife, on behalf of private individuals, for the purposes of TB screening providing that the submitter is prepared to meet the full cost of the work carried out. There are three provisos, namely:

the premises where the carcase or sick animal was found must be outside the Randomised Badger Culling Trial area;

the VLA has the capacity to undertake this work without compromising any of the statutory TB work that is being carried out on behalf of Defra;

as with all carcase submissions the duty veterinarian has the authority to cease examination where the carcase is found to be unsuitable for further examination, e.g. where the carcase is autolysed or where there is extensive rupture of internal organs due to traumatic injury.

Where there is a conflict in workload the private work may be declined or consideration given to retaining the carcase in either a chilled or frozen state until there is a more convenient time to complete the examination.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the scientific merit of the results obtained from the Thornbury badger clearance project. [159110]

Mr. Bradshaw: There were no scientific controls set up at the time of clearance. This limits the scientific merit of the results. However, both a before and after comparison, and a comparison with incidence in geographically close areas where no contemporary systematic removal of badgers occurred, provide useful information about the effect of culling.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many reports of road traffic accidents involving badgers were received by her Department in each of the last five years; how many carcasses were received by veterinary investigation service laboratories in each of those years; and how many were subject to full post-mortem examination including microbiological analysis. [159111]

Mr. Bradshaw: This information is given in the following table.

	Number of carcases reported	*Number of carcases delivered to veterinary laboratories*	*Number of carcases post mortemed*
November 2000 to January 2001	[1]—	[1]—	199
January to 31 May 2002	[1]—	252	220
1 June to December 2002	705	486	435
1 January to 31 December 2003	1,712	1,048	849
1 January to 29 February 2004	285	212	180
Total	2,702	1,998	1,883

[1] This information is not available.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what facilities are in place for the *(a)* collection from site of the carcases of badgers killed in road traffic accidents and *(b)* delivery to veterinary investigation laboratories. [159112]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are four refrigerated vans available to collect carcases of badgers from sites and deliver them to veterinary laboratories.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the long-term effect on the badger population of total clearance of badgers from a specific location. [159113]

Mr. Bradshaw: Studies by the Central Science Laboratory, at Woodchester Park in Gloucestershire, showed that it took badgers approximately 10 years to recolonise areas that had been totally cleared. Initial

immigration occurred very quickly, but the population took many years to reach the pre-cull density. This study also showed that, in the initial phase of recovery, badger social organisation was disrupted—the so called perturbation effect.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated cost of damage caused by badgers to *(a)* land, *(b)* buildings, *(c)* roads and *(d)* other structures is since the Prevention of Badgers Act 1992 came into force. [159114]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no national estimate of the financial value of damage to land, buildings, roads and other structures by badgers.

A survey of badger damage to agricultural properties in England and Wales conducted in 1997 estimated that the annual cost of damage to structures on farms (this includes buildings, machinery, drains, fences etc.) was £25.7 million (with 95 per cent. CI of 21.5–29.8m). This value was based on information provided by respondents and assumed that the respondents (55 per cent.) were an unbiased sample of the 3,600 farmers who received questionnaires.

Moore N.P., Whiterow, A., Langton, S.D., Kelly, P.P., Garthwaite, D., Bishop, J.D. and Cheeseman, C.L. (1998) The Assessment of Badger Damage to Agriculture and Forestry. Report to MAFF, Project VC 0318 .

Moore N.P., Whiterow, A., Kelly, P.F., Garthwaite, D., Bishop, J. D. Langton, S.D. and Cheeseman, C.L. (1999) Survey of badger Meles meles damage to agriculture in England and Wales. Journal of Applied Ecology 36:974–988

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 15 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 631W, whether she has consulted the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons on the veterinary resource implications of increasing the frequency of cattle TB testing. [159276]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons is one of the organisations we are currently consulting in the course of our review of the bovine tuberculosis strategy.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the need for animal vaccines in the event of the eradication of the wildlife reservoir of bovine TB. [159286]

Mr. Bradshaw: No wildlife reservoir of bovine TB has been identified for eradication. In the event that eradication of a wildlife reservoir was selected as a policy option, it may still be appropriate to retain the option of "ring-vaccination" in zones adjacent to those targeted by eradication. Since it cannot at present be guaranteed that eradication of a wildlife reservoir would completely eliminate bovine tuberculosis, there may still be a need to maintain research towards development of a cattle vaccine.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what reports she has received of badger damage to flood defence works; and what the estimated cost of the damage was. [159291]

Mr. Morley: Damage from badgers' setts and tunnels is most likely to be significant in fenland or lowland areas where embankments may be weakened.

Maintenance of such defences is a matter for the relevant operating authorities, who accordingly do not report such damage as a matter of course.

Repairs to defences are undertaken as part of authorities' routine maintenance programmes and it is not possible to give figures for the costs of repair due to damage caused by badgers.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the reliability of badger culling trials in areas which are bounded by major physical obstacles which prevent badger entry into cleared areas. [159292]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Thornbury clearance area was bounded by major motorways and rivers. Complete badger clearance was achieved by repeated gassing of setts with hydrogen cyanide. The area was subsequently recolonised, showing that badgers can migrate across barriers such as motorways. Large expanses of water are probably the only really effective barrier to badger movement.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are taken to ensure that wildlife unit officers and vehicles engaged in work relating to the trapping or destruction of badgers are unrecognisable. [159294]

Mr. Bradshaw: Wildlife Unit staff wear a range of outdoor clothing suitable for the conditions and environment in which they are working. None is specific to the Department or bears official 'logos'.

The Wildlife Unit now has a diverse fleet of off road vehicles and none bear any official identification as Crown or departmental vehicles. When necessary number plates of such vehicles have been changed.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 384W, whether these data indicate that a significant number of herd tests fail to identify infection where it is present; and what her best estimate is of the failure rate. [159295]

Mr. Bradshaw: The data for 2000 indicate that there were approximately 2 per cent. of confirmed new cases in herds that had been subject to a clear routine whole herd test in the 90 days prior to detection of the infected animal(s) at the slaughterhouse. It is not known how many of these infections started during this 90 day period but after the routine test. In half of these cases, no further animals were found infected at the subsequent check tests.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what evidence her Department has collated on whether badgers have been translocated illegally from the Krebs trials areas. [159296]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 484W.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 538W, on badgers, to what level the incidence of TB in 1997 was expected to rise by 2003; and what level it reached in 2003. [159327]

Mr. Bradshaw: The incidence of TB in badgers in 1997 is not known, and no estimation was made of expected incidence by 2003.

The incidence of a disease is the number of new cases expressed as a percentage of the population at risk. Therefore, for badgers it is not feasible to estimate incidence, as we have no reliable means of estimating the uninfected population or the number becoming infected.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to reduce the compensation payable to livestock owners for TB. [159052]

Mr. Bradshaw: Compensation for livestock slaughtered for TB control is paid at the market value of the animals. However, ongoing measures to rationalise compensation will see the introduction of quality assurance methods to control wayward valuations and provide greater accountability.

Fallen Stock

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she has put in hand to ensure the biosecurity of vehicles undertaking the collection of fallen stock from different farms in one journey. [158739]

Mr. Bradshaw: The EU Animal By-Products Regulation (EC 1774/2002) already controls the collection and transportation of animal by-products, including animal carcases. It requires animal by-products to be transported in a way that ensures there is no leakage from vehicles or containers. It also requires records to be kept of any consignment of animal by-products to assist in the auditing and traceability of this material.

In addition, general guidance on on-farm biosecurity is available on the Defra website: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/animindx.htm

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether there is sufficient incineration capacity to deal with material handled by the Fallen Stock Subscription Scheme which cannot be processed by rendering. [158742]

Mr. Bradshaw: No specific assessment of incineration capacity has been made, but the collection and disposal industry as a whole has consistently advised that collectively there is sufficient capacity to dispose of fallen stock under the Scheme.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what issues remain to be resolved before the Fallen Stock Subscription Scheme can be introduced. [158743]

Mr. Bradshaw: The National Fallen Stock Company has had many issues to resolve since its work started in November last year. Many have been relatively straightforward but others have been more complex and the board has advised that these require more time and negotiation to get right. For example, identifying available alternatives required to cope with sheep in full fleece which cannot be rendered, setting up payment and tender arrangements for the collection and disposal industry, and devising fair subscription rates for the pig and poultry sectors. In addition to these practical problems, the company has, with Defra, been required to ensure the scheme as a whole does not contravene the state aid rules of the EU. A state aid notification has been submitted for the scheme and we expect to have further discussions with the European Commission about the scheme before it goes ahead.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons on each occasion she postponed establishment of the Fallen Stock Subscription Scheme. [158744]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra had lengthy negotiations with the farming unions and other industry bodies between April 2002 and July 2003. On 24 July 2003 it was announced that the basis for sharing the costs of the Scheme and its eventual transfer to industry had been agreed and that the Scheme would go ahead. At that time it was expected that the Scheme would begin in January 2004. That proved to be unachievable. On 24 February the Board of the National Fallen Stock Company and government jointly announced that the launch would have to be postponed. The reasons for this were set out in PQ 1897 to which I would refer my hon. Friend.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what financial contribution her Department has made to the establishment of the Fallen Stock Subscription Scheme. [158745]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has committed to a contribution of £5 million in the first year, £3 million in the second year and £2 million in the third year of the Scheme after which the Scheme is expected to be self-financing. Devolved administrations have committed to paying proportionate sums. In addition Defra has agreed to pay a further £1 million towards establishing the administration of the Scheme in the first year.

Farm Incomes (Buckingham)

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on farm income levels for farmers in Buckingham in each of the last seven years. [161561]

Alun Michael: Due to the small number of farms in Buckingham, there is no robust data available on farm incomes for farmers in Buckingham over the last seven years. Net farm income for farms in the East EU "Super Region" and for England over the last seven years are show in the following table.

Net farm income

	East EU Super Region	England
1996–97	36,636	29,833
1997–98	16,281	13,847
1998–99	5,810	10,359
1999–2000	9,604	7,981
2000–01	11,367	9,886
2001–02	11,997	13,558
2002–03	16,894	16,435

Source:
Farm Business Survey.

Net farm income is the return to the principle farmer and spouse for their manual and managerial labour and to the tenant-type capital of the business.

GM Crops

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she was informed that *(a)* Liberty on its own had proved ineffective as a herbicide used with GMHT fodder maize crops in the United States, and *(b)* that to overcome this problem Bayer has been promoting the use of Liberty/Atrazine mix since the spring of 2001. [163170]

Mr. Morley: The herbicide regime employed on the GMHT crops in the farm-scale evaluations (FSE) was established at the beginning of the trials, based on proposals by the chemical manufacturers and the terms of the experimental license granted by the Pesticide Safety Directorate. These guidelines remained in force throughout the FSE. This herbicide regime will now be specified in writing on the release consent in line with advice given by the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment on 13 January 2004 and the announcement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, on 9 March. Accordingly, anyone intending to grow the GMHT maize will only be able to do so using that herbicide regime that was tested in the FSE.

Evidence that Liberty alone provided insufficient weed control in the USA, and that it was on occasion mixed with Atrazine emerged in June 2002 and was immediately put to the FSE scientific steering committee for advice. They considered the issue and following assurance from industry that the herbicide regime being used in the FSE suited agronomic conditions in the UK, the committee were content to leave protocols unchanged.

M. bovis

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether *M. bovis* can survive in silage clamps. [158362]

Mr. Bradshaw: In a study of *M. bovis* survival in silage, *M. bovis* was recovered from laboratory-prepared silage inoculated with $3.5x10^6$ colony forming units of *M. bovis* after 24 hours. The organism was not recovered at six or 12 weeks after inoculation. This indicates that it is unlikely that *M. bovis* will survive the ensiling process for any length of time if silage is properly prepared.

Market Towns

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what budget *(a)* was set for 2003–04 and *(b)* has been allocated for 2004–05 and 2005–06 by each relevant Government Department for the Market Towns Initiative, broken down by English region. [161651]

Alun Michael: White Paper offered funding of £37 million to enable the Regional Development Agencies and the Countryside Agency to support market town regeneration in the regions over a period of three years. £32 million was allocated to the Regional Development Agencies and £5 million to the Countryside Agency. The initiative was not established as a national funding programme with an annual budget, but as a means of enabling regional partnerships to target towns in their region according to selection criteria agreed regionally.

The start of the initiative was delayed in many of the regions due to the Foot and Mouth crisis, with some regions not launching their own initiatives or incurring spend until last year. For this reason data from the Regional Development Agencies on their expenditure is unlikely to be available until the initiative is evaluated.

Information from the Countryside Agency on its spending to date, broken down by region is given in the following table. The total amount is £11.5 million which is more than double the figure promised in the original figure promised in the Rural White Paper.

Market Towns—Expenditure by region by year 2000–01

	HQ	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	West Midlands	East Midlands	East of England	South East	South West	Total
Income	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0	0
Staff costs*	625,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	625,000
Running costs	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Transport	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0
Market towns Initiative	154,361	24,594	96,196	32,195	12,361	28,206	29,437	44,130	5,000	426,480
Sub total	779,361	24,594	96,196	32,195	12,361	28,206	29,437	44,130	5,000	1,051,480

2001–02

	HQ	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Number	West Midlands	East Midlands	East of England	South East	South West	Total
Income	-11,500	—	-20,000	—	—	-25,000	—	—	—	-56,500
Staff costs*	765,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	765,000
Running costs	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Market towns Initiative including Transport	338,259	122,674	760,836	370,696	436,478	176,805	300,279	202,209	128,435	2,176,671
Transport	2,352	—	41,527	43,425	187,486	17,183	81,645	97,441	113,303	584,362
Market towns Initiative	335,907	122,674	119,309	267,271	248,992	159,622	218,634	104,768	15,132	1,592,309
Sub total	1,091,759	122,674	140,836	310,696	436,478	151,805	300,279	202,209	128,435	2,885,171

2002–03

	HQ	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Number	West Midlands	East Midlands	East of England	South East	South West	Total
Income	-33,624	—	—	—	—	-76,590	—	—	—	-110,214
Staff costs	172,559	51,044	56,384	97,039	41,025	89,242	45,788	65,566	57,040	675,687
Running costs	19,063	4,212	6,091	10,275	4,624	8,763	5,044	12,792	5,448	76,312
Market towns Initiative including Transport	278,797	203,067	349,977	720,086	677,723	474,475	267,117	328,683	270,220	3,570,139
Transport	-9,187	57,149	118,253	122,150	468,408	83,883	118,411	73,443	69,846	1,102,356
Market towns Initiative	287,978	145,918	231,724	597,936	209,315	390,592	148,706	255,240	200,374	2,467,783
Sub total	436,789	258,323	412,452	827,400	723,372	495,890	317,949	407,041	332,708	4,211,924

2003–04

	HQ	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Number	West Midlands	East Midlands	East of England	South East	South West	Total
Income	-120,403	—	—	—	-3,979	-22,000	—	—	—	-146,382
Staff costs	596,846	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	596,846
Running costs	21,000	4,200	4,400	10,100	5,600	7,000	3,200	11,500	5,000	72,000
Market towns Initiative including Transport	197,556	792,392	229,304	376,557	673,542	490,321	217,155	282,737	209,408	2,868,966
Transport	0	50,405	87,806	156,287	242,509	419,818	113,191	123,151	54,236	1,247,403
Market towns Initiative	197,556	141,987	141,498	220,270	431,033	70,503	103,964	159,580	155,172	1,621,563
Sub total	694,999	196,592	233,704	386,657	675,163	475,321	220,355	294,231	214,408	3,391,430

Total

	HQ	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	West Midlands	East Midlands	East of England	South East	South West	Total
Income	-165,527	0	-20,000	0	-3,979	-123,590	0	0	0	-313,096
Staff costs	2,159,405	51,044	56,384	97,039	41,025	89,242	45,788	65,566	57,040	2,662,533
Running costs	40,063	8,412	10,491	20,375	10,224	15,763	8,244	24,292	10,448	148,312
Market towns Initiative including Transport	814,606	518,133	740,117	1,407,339	1,787,743	1,141,601	784,551	813,623	608,063	8,615,776
Transport	-6,835	107,554	247,586	321,862	898,403	520,884	313,247	294,035	237,385	2,934,121
Market towns Initiative	975,802	435,173	588,727	1,117,672	901,701	648,923	500,741	563,718	375,678	6,108,135
Sub total	813,361	76,841	167,646	189,892	12,361	86,978	88,978	252,220	5,000	1,051,480

[1] The Countryside Agency accounting system has changed since the Initiative started so a breakdown of running costs and salaries is not possible.

[2] Funding for transport is included, although it should be noted that this was a separate funding stream. Also, as some schemes were designed to link towns and cannot be attributed to a single town, this information has been excluded

[3] Regions town by town expenditure may not add up to the total on the overview page. This is due to inclusion of projects which are funded to benefit all towns in a region, such as regional networks or training.

Ministerial Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she last used a train in connection with her ministerial duties. [155159]

Margaret Beckett: I last used a train on Friday 30 January 2004 to travel to Manchester to officially open the Manchester Airport Ground Transport Interchange.

National Farmers Union

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she last met the National Farmers Union Young Farmers Club; and whether *(a)* dairy and *(b)* beef prices were discussed. [156109]

Margaret Beckett: I have not held a formal meeting with the National Farmers Union Young Farmers Club.

Renewable Energy

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary a of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on recent trends in investment in renewable energy and the effect of those trends upon residents of Crosby. [160570]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

Recent trends in renewable energy investment have been highly encouraging. More new capacity has been constructed in the last few years than in the previous decade, and a significant amount is currently in the pipeline. This covers a wide range of technologies including onshore and offshore wind, solar and biomass.

While this investment has not translated into capacity within Crosby itself there are several wind farm developments, both constructed and proposed, in the surrounding area. The first of these is the 3.6 MW 6 turbine wind farm at Seaforth Docks. It was constructed in 1999 and is roughly three miles from Crosby. The second is the North Hoyle offshore wind farm, which is located around 20–25 miles from Crosby and was opened in November 2003.

There are also two proposed developments for offshore wind farms relatively near to Crosby. The first of these is the 30 turbine Burbo Bank offshore wind farm, it is due to being constructed in 2005 and will be situated around 5–6 miles out to sea from Crosby.

The second is the Gwynt-y-Mor site, which has been awarded a licence under round two of the offshore wind programme and would be located around 15–20 miles from Crosby. The award of a site licence option is only the first step in the development of this wind farm, however, it is hoped that it will be completed by 2010.

Severely Disadvantaged Areas

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what alternative schemes for farm payments she has considered for severely disadvantaged areas. [161537]

Alun Michael: The CAP agreement provided member states with a number of methods for paying the single farm payment including historic, flat rate and hybrid options. Defra will publish shortly an analysis of the economic impact on the English farming industry of these various broad models, including the decision to allocate entitlement on the basis set out in my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's, statement to the House on 12 February.

Strategic Plant Breeding

Dr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the strategic plant breeding research activities that have been supported by her Department in the last 10 years; and what the *(a)* location and *(b)* amount of support provided by her Department for each project was in each year of the project's existence. [161990]

Mr. Bradshaw: A table showing Defra's plant breeding research projects since the formation of the Department have been placed in the Library of the House. Details of the research providers, and their funding in each year are provided. A full list of the relevant MAFF research projects from 1994 to 2001 can be provided if required.

Defra's current research underpinning crop breeding is informed by an external assessment of the role of publicly funded plant breeding research. The project entitled 'The Role of Future Public Research' investment in the Genetic Improvement of UK Grown Crops was completed in September 2002. The assessment provides a strong rationale for public investment in plant breeding research to support sustainable development in farming and has informed the Defra Science and Innovation Strategy. It has been widely distributed within the research and plant breeding community, and is available on the Defra website.

Defra's current portfolio centres around the use of public research funds to revitalise public-good plant breeding through partnerships between plant breeders and the research base.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Supreme Court

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the estimated start-up costs are of the new UK Supreme Court; what the estimated running costs are per annum for the first five years of existence of the new UK Supreme Court; and which UK Government department will be responsible for meeting those costs. [162328]

Mr. Leslie: The cost of establishing the Supreme Court has been estimated for a number of potential building solutions. For those requiring capital investment, the set up costs have been estimated as being between £6 million and £32 million.

The estimated annual building running costs range from £1.6 million to £6.5 million. The other operational costs will be in the region of £4.3 million, made up of £3.2 million salaries (including £2.1 million judicial salaries), plus £1.1 million administrative running costs.

The costs of the UK Supreme Court will be met through fees and through resources provided by the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Carter Report

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the *(a)* future training needs, *(b)* career development and *(c)* qualifications for members of the Probation Service following the publication of the Carter Report. [155618]

Paul Goggins: The structure of the National Offender Management Service is yet to be finalised and the Probation Service will continue to function as it is for the moment. Any future changes to training and career development practices will be subject to the usual consultation arrangement with staff and unions.

Bichard Inquiry

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost of the Bichard inquiry; and what costs have been incurred by public bodies which have been required to be represented to date. [162702]

Ms Blears: Costs are estimated in the region of £2 million.

Costs incurred by other bodies are not known.

Care Homes

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many existing care home staff had enhanced level Criminal Records Bureau checks processed by 31 December 2003; what percentage this constitutes of the total number of existing care home staff; and if he will make a statement. [161936]

Ms Blears: As at 31 December 2003, the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) had completed 39,943 Enhanced Disclosure checks and 2,477 Standard Disclosure checks on existing care home staff. There are no figures to indicate what percentage of staff this represents.

In September 2003, the Department of Health issued its schedule to employers and owners in the care sector on the reintroduction of the previously postponed checks on existing care home staff. Initially, employers were asked to send application forms to the CRB by 31 December 2003. Following discussion between the Home Office and the Department of Health, this date was extended to 29 February 2004.

Crime Reporting

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many minor crimes have been reported using the online facility since its introduction. [162810]

Ms Blears: Online minor crime reports from the public have been fed to Police Services via the Police Portal (www.police.uk) since May 2001. Each must be responded to within two working days, though outcomes cannot be differentiated from normal crime figures. The Police Information Technology Organisation tallies the number of online minor crime reports. Incomplete reports trigger referral to other contacts, for example to 999 for emergencies or to a force's own website.

The following table details yearly online minor crime reports and referrals through the Police Portal since its inception:

	Minor crime reports	*Referrals*
2004 (January to February)	2,318	2,093
2003	14,982	11,461
2002	13,774	9,000
2001 (May to December)	2,009	2,241

Firearms

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* fatalities other than suicides and *(b)* injuries, were caused by single shot target pistols in each year from 1986 to 1996. [163011]

Caroline Flint: The requested information is not available centrally.

Hertfordshire Police Authority

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the level of financial support made available by central Government to the Hertfordshire police authority was in each year since 1997. [161435]

Ms Blears: The information is set out in the table.

£ million

	General Government grants[1]	*Special payments*[2]	*Specific grants and capital grant*[3]	*Total*
1997–98	76.0	0	1.7	111
1998–99	77.2	0	2.0	79.2
1999–2000	79.4	3.0	2.6	85.0
2000–01	92.9	2.8	1.6	97.3
2001–02	99.0	0.6	6.7	106.3
2001–02[4]	96.3	0.6	6.7	103.6
2002–03	98.6	0.3	8.1	107.0
2003–04	101.5	0	9.5	111.0
2004–05	104.8	0	9.5	114.3

[1] General Government grants comprise Home Office Police grant, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Revenue Support Grant and National Non-Domestic Rates.

[2] Special payments for transitional costs associated with changes to the boundaries of the Metropolitan Police District from 1 April 2000.

[3] Includes funding from the Crime Fighting Fund, Basic Command Unit funding, Community Support Officer funding, Special Priority payments, Airwave, the DMA Expansion Programme, South East Allowance payments, capital grant and the Premises Improvement Fund.

[4] General grant figures for 2001–02 are not directly comparable with 2002–03 due to the change in funding arrangements of NCS and NCIS. Adjusted figures for 2001–02 are therefore included above.

Home Detention Curfew Scheme

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the changes made to the eligibility rules for the home detention curfew scheme, broken down by date. [163271]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 23 March 2004]:* The following changes have been made to the Home Detention Curfew (HDC) scheme since the scheme was introduced on 28 January 1999.

On 1 March 2001 those required to register with the police under Part 1 of the Sex Offenders Act 1997 became ineligible for the scheme under the provisions of section 65 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Service Act 2000.

Following this, on 1 May 2002 the Presumptive HDC scheme was introduced. Under the scheme prisoners serving sentences of between three months and under 12 months are released on Home Detention Curfew for the

latter part of their sentence unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. This streamlined scheme is applicable to low risk only, less serious offenders. Drug dealers, violent and sexual offenders are not eligible for Presumptive HDC.

On 16 December 2002 the maximum curfew period was extended from 60 to 90 days and then, on 14 July 2003, the curfew period was extended further to 135 days. At the same time, a presumption against suitability for release on HDC was introduced for offenders serving sentences for certain serious violent offences. These offences include attempted murder, explosives offences, possession of an offensive weapon, cruelty to children and racially aggravated offences. In addition, prisoners with any current or previous history of sexual offending, not already barred from HDC, are presumed unsuitable for release. Further, also with effect from 14 July 2003, young offenders, under the age of 18, sentenced to a term of detention under Section 91 of the Powers of Criminal Court (Sentencing Act) became eligible for consideration for HDC. Prior to that date all prisoners under 18 years-of-age were statutorily excluded from HDC.

Finally, with effect from 14 January 2004 notorious prisoners whose release may undermine public confidence in the scheme are referred to the Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service, who takes the final decision whether, after taking all matters into consideration and the individual circumstances of the case, early release is appropriate.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library copies of circulars to governors and other communications to prison authorities issued this year which included instructions on the operation of the home detention curfew scheme. [163272]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 23 March 2004]:* Yes.

Human Embryos

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions were taken against laboratories found experimenting on human embryos over 14 days in each year since 2000. [162585]

Paul Goggins: Persons proceeded against for offences of experimenting on human embryos over 14 days under section 41 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 cannot be separately identified in the statistics collected centrally.

Internet Pornography (Children)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many pornographic images of children have been removed from the internet following investigations by *(a)* police and *(b)* their agencies in each year since 2000. [161335]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible to say how many indecent images of children have been removed from the internet as a result of police or other investigations. Even where an internet site is closed down following an investigation, many of the images that were on it may remain in circulation through other websites, newsgroups, or other internet activity. Nor can we be certain how many sites hosted outside the UK have been closed down following reports originating within the UK. Figures from the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) show that the percentage of sites reported to them found to contain illegal images of children which were hosted in the UK fell from 18 per cent. in 1997, to 3 per cent. in 2000, and to 1 per cent. in 2003. The number of sites within the UK identified in each year from 2000 is given in the table. In each of these cases the internet service providers concerned removed the offending material and police inquiries were made. In 2003 the IWF also identified 510,000 indecent photographs of children carried on newsgroups through the UK's Usenet infrastructure, resulting in access to these being stopped by the IWF members who provide a Usenet feed to their customers.

Number of UK hosted sites identified as potentially illegal by the IWF

	Potentially illegal content: UK
2000	74
2001	80
2002	88
2003	34
Total	276

Mobile Cells

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were locked into mobile cells in *(a)* Northampton, *(b)* Corby and *(c)* Wellingborough in each of the last two weeks. [162627]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* No prisoners were locked into mobile cells in Northampton, Corby or Wellingborough in the last two weeks.

Licensing Act

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted under (i) section 172, (ii) section 172a and (iii) section 173 of the Licensing Act 1964 in each year since 1997; and how many landlords have had their licences revoked due to breach of these provisions. [161719]

Paul Goggins: The information on the number of persons proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts under the Licensing Act 1964, sections 172, 172A and 173, England and Wales 1997 to 2002 is contained in the table.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

Information on the number of landlords who have had their licences revoked due to breach of these conditions is not collected centrally.

Persons proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts under the Licensing Act 1964, sections 172, 172A and 173, England and Wales 1997 to 2002[1]

Offence description/Statute	Proceeded against	Found guilty
Permitting drunkenness or riotous conduct on the premises or selling liquor to a drunken person/Licensing Act 1964, section 172		
1997	9	4
1998	22	11
1999	13	10
2000	10	2
2001	10	5
2002	7	4
Relevant person working in licensed premises to permit drunkenness or violent behaviour etc./Licensing Act 1964, section 172A as added by Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 S.32		
1997	n/a	n/a
1998	n/a	n/a
1999	n/a	n/a
2000	n/a	n/a
2001	n/a	n/a
2002	1	—
Person in licensed premises procuring intoxicating liquor for a drunken person or aiding a drunken person to obtain drink/ Licensing Act 1964, section 173		
1997	3	2
1998	5	3
1999	2	1
2000	—	—
2001	—	—
2002	1	—

n/a = Not applicable.
[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Misuse of Computers Act

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions there have been for unauthorised (i) access to computer material, (ii) access to computer material with intent to commit or facilitate commission of further offences and (iii) modification of computer material under the Misuse of Computers Act 1990 in each year since 1990, broken down by region. [162414]

Paul Goggins: The available information, for England and Wales, from 1992 to 2002, is contained in the table.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for offences under the Computer Misuse Act 1990[1]*, by region, England and Wales 1992 to 2002*

	Section 1[2]		Section 2[2]		Section 3[2]	
Year/region	Proceeded against	Found guilty	Proceeded against	Found guilty	Proceeded against	Found guilty
1992						
North East	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
North West	n/a	n/a	—	—	1	2
Yorkshire and Humberside	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
East Midlands	n/a	n/a	—	2	1	1
West Midlands	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
East	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
London	n/a	n/a	—	—	1	—
South East	n/a	n/a	1	1	1	1
South West	n/a	n/a	—	—	2	—
Wales	n/a	n/a	—	—	6	2
England and Wales	n/a	n/a	1	3	6	6
1993						
North East	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
North West	n/a	n/a	1	—	1	1
Yorkshire and Humberside	n/a	n/a	—	—	2	2
East Midlands	n/a	n/a	—	—	1	—
West Midland	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
East	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
London	n/a	n/a	—	1	—	—
South East	n/a	n/a	—	—	1	1
South West	n/a	n/a	—	—	2	—
Wales	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
England and Wales	n/a	n/a	1	1	7	4
1994						
North East	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
North West	n/a	n/a	—	—	1	—
Yorkshire and Humberside	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
East Midlands	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	1
West Midlands	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
East	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
London	n/a	n/a	—	—	1	—
South East	n/a	n/a	—	1	—	1
South West	n/a	n/a	—	—	1	—
Wales	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
England and Wales	n/a	n/a	—	1	3	2

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for offences under the Computer Misuse Act 1990[1], by region, England and Wales 1992 to 2002

	Section 1[2]		Section 2[2]		Section 3[2]	
Year/region	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*
1995						
North East	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
North West	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
Yorkshire and Humberside	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
East Midlands	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
West Midlands	n/a	n/a	—	—	1	—
East	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
London	n/a	n/a	—	—	2	1
South East	n/a	n/a	—	—	2	1
South West	n/a	n/a	1	—	—	2
Wales	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
England and Wales	n/a	n/a	1	—	5	4
1996						
North East	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
North West	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
Yorkshire and Humberside	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
East Midland	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
West Midlands	n/a	n/a	—	—	1	—
East	n/a	n/a	1	—	—	—
London	n/a	n/a	1	1	—	4
South East	n/a	n/a	—	—	1	1
South West	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
Wales	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
England and Wales	n/a	n/a	2	1	2	5
1997						
North East	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
North West	n/a	n/a	—	—	1	—
Yorkshire and Humberside	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
East Midlands	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
West Midlands	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
East	n/a	n/a	—	—	1	—
London	n/a	n/a	—	—	5	3
South East	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
South West	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
Wales	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	—
England and Wales	n/a	n/a	—	—	7	3
1998						
North East	—	—	—	—	—	—
North West	—	—	—	—	1	—
Yorkshire and Humberside	1	1	—	—	—	—
East Midlands	1	1	—	—	—	—
West Midlands	—	—	3	1	1	—
East	1	—	—	—	—	—
London	—	—	—	—	1	1
South East	3	1	—	—	—	—
South West	—	—	—	—	1	—
Wales	—	—	3	1	—	3
England and Wales	6	3	6	2	4	4
1999						
North East	—	—	—	—	—	—
North West	—	—	1	1	1	—
Yorkshire and Humberside	—	—	—	—	—	—
East Midlands	1	—	—	—	1	2
West Midlands	1	1	—	—	—	1
East	—	—	—	—	—	1
London	—	—	—	—	—	—
South East	3	2	—	—	2	2
South West	—	—	—	—	—	1
Wales	1	—	2	—	—	—
England and Wales	6	3	3	1	4	7
2000						
North East	1	1	—	—	—	—
North West	1	1	—	—	—	—
Yorkshire and Humberside	2	2	—	—	—	1

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for offences under the Computer Misuse Act 1990[1], by region, England and Wales 1992 to 2002

	Section 1[2]		Section 2[2]		Section 3[2]	
Year/region	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*
East Midlands	—	—	—	—	1	1
West Midlands	1	1	—	—	1	—
East	—	—	1	1	1	1
London	2	2	2	1	2	—
South East	—	—	—	—	1	1
South West	—	—	—	—	1	—
Wales	1	2	—	—	1	—
England and Wales	8	9	3	2	8	4
2001						
North East	—	—	—	—	—	—
North West	—	—	—	—	3	3
Yorkshire and Humberside	—	2	—	1	7	4
East Midlands	—	—	—	—	1	1
West Midlands	1	1	1	1	—	—
East	1	1	—	—	—	7
London	1	1	2	1	1	2
South East	1	1	1	—	—	—
South West	1	1	—	—	—	2
Wales	4	2	—	—	—	—
England and Wales	9	9	4	3	12	19
2002						
North East	—	—	—	—	—	—
North West	—	—	1	—	1	1
Yorkshire and Humberside	—	—	—	1	—	—
East Midlands	2	—	1	—	1	—
West Midlands	—	—	1	1	1	—
East	—	—	—	—	—	—
London	—	—	—	—	4	4
South East	—	—	1	—	1	1
South West	2	2	2	3	—	—
Wales	—	—	—	—	—	1
England and Wales	4	2	6	5	8	7

[1] Sections of the Computer Misuse Act 1990 are as follows:
Section 1—unauthorised access to computer material
Section 2—unauthorised access with intent to commit or facilitate commission of further offences
Section 3 unauthorised modification of computer material
[2] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Offending Behaviour Courses

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of prisoners serving a sentence for *(a)* burglary, *(b)* offences of violence and *(c)* drug related offences have completed an offending behaviour course in each of the last 10 years. [163282]

Paul Goggins: The following tables contains information on the number of programmes completed by prisoners sentenced for burglary, violence and drug offences:

	Completions of Accredited offending behaviour programmes[1,2]	*Percentage of receptions under sentence serving 12 months or more completing Accredited programmes*
1993–94	548	2.65
1994–95	839	3.73
1995–96	1,185	4.81
1996–97	1,450	5.15
1997–98	2,654	8.77
1998–99	3,501	11.50
1999–2000	5,024	16.61
2000–01	6,516	21.87
2001–02	6,709	22.26
2002–03	7,647	23.28

[1] Prison Statistics England and Wales 2002 Cm 5996.
[2] Programmes delivered in a particular year are not necessarily delivered to prisoners received into prison in that year.

(a) Burglary

	Completions of Accredited offending behaviour programmes by those with an index offence for burglary	*Percentage of receptions under sentence serving 12 months or more for burglary completing Accredited programmes*
1993–94	Not available	Not available
1994–95	Not available	Not available
1995–96	Not available	Not available
1996–97	268	5
1997–98	658	10
1998–99	807	13
1999–2000	1,161	18
2000–01	1,382	20
2001–02	1,383	25
2002–03	1,511	25

(b) Violence against the person

	Completions of Accredited Offending Behaviour Programmes by those with an index offence for violence	*Percentage of Receptions Under Sentence Serving 12 months or more for violence completing Accredited Programmes*
1993–94	Not available	Not available
1994–95	Not available	Not available
1995–96	Not available	Not available
1996–97	69	1
1997–98	187	4
1998–99	306	6
1999–2000	618	13
2000–01	931	19
2001–02	974	19
2002–03	1,062	19

(c) Drug offences

	Completions of Accredited offending behaviour programmes by those with an index offence for drug offences	*Percentage of receptions under sentence serving 12 months or more for drug offences completing Accredited programmes*
1993–94	Not available	Not available
1994–95	Not available	Not available
1995–96	Not available	Not available
1996–97	112	3
1997–98	228	5
1998–99	408	8
1999–2000	754	15
2000–01	1,002	19
2001–02	1,175	21
2002–03	1,533	28

Note:
The tables *(a)* to *(c)* are based on index offence and do not include sex offences where violence may have been a feature of the offence, and only cover the following programmes—ETS, R and R, CALM, CSCP, and RAPt.

The Prison Service also provides a range of education programmes and other activities aimed at rehabilitation and increasing the opportunity for prisoners to find employment and accommodation on release.

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of prisoners completed a course to address offending behaviour in each of the last 10 years. [163283]

Paul Goggins: Not all prisoners are suitable for accredited offending behaviour programmes. Selection for an accredited programme is subject to an assessment of a prisoner's risk of re-offending and individual need. The duration of the programme is also taken into consideration.

Information on the number of programmes completed by prisoners sentenced to one year or over is set out in the following table:

	Completions of Accredited offending behaviour programmes[1,2]	*Percentage of receptions under sentence serving 12 months or more completing Accredited programmes*
1993–94	548	2.65
1994–95	839	3.73
1995–96	1,185	4.81
1996–97	1,450	5.15
1997–98	2,654	8.77
1998–99	3,501	11.50
1999–2000	5,024	16.61
2000–01	6,516	21.87
2001–02	6,709	22.26
2002–03	7,647	23.28

[1] Prison Statistics England and Wales 2002 Cm5996
[2] Programmes delivered in a particular year are not necessarily delivered to prisoners received into prison in that year.

The Prison Service also provides a range of education programmes and other activities aimed at rehabilitation and increasing the opportunity for prisoners to find employment and accommodation on release.

Operation Safeguard

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police forces are on standby for Operation Safeguard. [162628]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* It is not planned to activate Operation Safeguard at this time. No police forces have been placed on standby for the routine use of police cells:

PACE Convictions

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted under section 25 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 in each of the last five years. [162412]

Paul Goggins: Section 25 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act gives the police a general power of arrest for the purposes of enabling the police to prosecute for a non-arrestable offence or to prevent a crime from being committed. The statistics collected centrally on persons proceeded against and those convicted do not enable those originally arrested under this power to be separately identified.

Prison Cells

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of prison cells in England and Wales were equipped with a television in each of the last 10 years. [163277]

Paul Goggins: Historical information on the number of cells in use and the number of cells with in-cell television is not kept centrally.

The Government announced that in-cell television would be made available across the prison estate as part of the incentives and earned privileges scheme, on 1 June 1998, *Official Report*, columns 50–51. Prior to 1998, only a small number of television sets were available in individual prisons. The number available was not centrally recorded. Figures for the number of televisions delivered to establishments in each year since 1998 are as follows.

	Number
1998	10,388
1999	4,938
2000	12,477
2001	12,471
2002	11,455

These figures include replacement sets so do not relate directly to the number of televisions in use.

Prison Education

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 1 March, *Official Report*, column 722W, on prison education, what assessments are made of the educational needs of each individual prisoner. [162353]

Paul Goggins: All establishments provide an induction programme and initial assessment of each offender's literacy and numeracy skills. Assessment materials must be referenced to the national standards for adult literacy and numeracy.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 721W, on prison education, how many heads of learning and skills have been appointed; and if he will make a statement on their roles and responsibilities. [162354]

Paul Goggins: 120 Heads of Learning and Skills have been appointed to the adult estate. Of these, 118 are in post.

Their role is to:

lead the strategic planning process for learning and skills activities throughout their establishment in order to promote a vision of the prison as a secure learning centre;

promote, plan and co-ordinate all learning and skills activity, including programmes provided by the voluntary/community sector, in order to provide a comprehensive and coherent learning and skills programme for all prisoners;

ensure management information systems are in place to record accurately all required data relating to learning and skills provision so that outcomes can be assessed;

ensure that learning and skills are central to the sentence planning process in order to achieve an effective transition for offenders from custody into the community; and

oversee their establishment's quality improvement group, ensuring that a quality improvement strategy, a self-assessment report, action plan and development plan are produced.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 721W, on prison education, what level of increased investment is being made by his Department, over the next three years, to increase opportunities for learning and skills across the range of prison activities. [162356]

Paul Goggins: The Department for Education and Skills is responsible for the funding of Learning and Skills in prisons. Funding for prison education and training in 2003–04 is £97 million, rising to £122 million in 2004–05 and £135 million in 2005- 06.

Prison Officers

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many minority ethnic prison officers *(a)* joined and *(b)* left the Prison Service in each of the last five years; [162362]

(2) how many minority ethnic prison officers have resigned from the Prison Service within *(a)* six months, *(b)* one year and *(c)* two years of starting their employment in each of the last five years. [162363]

Paul Goggins: Information relating to the total number of minority ethnic prison officers who joined and left the Prison Service in each of the last five years is contained in the following table. The figures include existing Prison Service staff who converted to the prison officer grade during the period, and are based on voluntary declarations by staff.

	Minority Ethnic Prison Officers			
	Number of recruits and conversions to Prison Officer		*Number of Prison Officers leaving the Service*	
	Number	*Percentage of total*	*Number*	*Percentage of total*
1999	53	5.2	26	3.1
2000	78	7.5	26	2.9
2001	36	7.6	38	2.8
2002	108	6.7	50	4.0
2003	140	5.9	60	4.3

Information on the number of minority ethnic prison officers who resigned from the Prison Service between 1 August 2000 and 31 December 2003 during their first two years of service is given in the following table.

	Minority Ethnic Prison Officers		
	Resigned within six months of appointment	*Resigned between six and 12 months of appointment*	*Resigned between one and two years of appointment*
August to December 2000	2	—	—
2001	—	—	5
2002	3	1	—
2003	2	—	1

Information relating to length of service for staff who left the Service prior to August 2000 is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Prisons (Accommodation)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the prisons where prisoner accommodation is due to be refurbished in the next 12 months, indicating those where the work *(a)* is expected to proceed as planned, *(b)* has been brought forward and *(c)* has been put on hold. [163330]

Paul Goggins: The following prisons are scheduled to be part of the wing refurbishment scheme during the next financial year:

Lincoln
Preston
Wakefield
Wandsworth
Pentonville
Winchester

In addition, work to improve conditions in other prison wings may take place, while this up-grading work is being undertaken.

In order to increase capacity across the prison estate, some refurbishment work may have to be deferred. Decisions on which schemes may be affected are still subject to consideration.

Prisons (Male Estate)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the expected cost of re-rolling *(a)* HM Prison Winchester and *(b)* HM Prison Edmund's Hill is; and how many additional places the changes will create for the male estate. [163332]

Paul Goggins: There will be no significant increase in building costs, beyond the provision of gender-specific facilities and possible adjustments to physical security, in the re-role of the West Hill wing at HMP Winchester and of HMP Edmund's Hill. Area and local managers are working to establish security, regime and staffing profiles appropriate to the new role. Therefore, full costs or savings are not yet available.

The re-role of HMP Edmund's Hill will make 310 places available for male prisoners. The West Hill wing of HMP Winchester will initially provide a further 87 places for male prisoners, with an additional 40 bed unit becoming available in May 2004.

Private Security Act

Mr. David: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the timetable is for implementing the Private Security Act 2001. [163221]

Ms Blears: The Security Industry Authority (SIA) commenced licensing of door supervisors in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight on 1 March 2004. It is proposed to roll out licensing of door supervisors across the rest of the country on a phased geographical basis from June 2004 to April 2005. Door supervisors in Wales will be able to apply for an SIA licence from 14 June 2004 and must be in possession of an SIA licence by 6 September 2004. On current plans, the timetable for the introduction of licensing in the other industry sectors covered by the Private Security Industry Act 2001 is as follows: Vehicle Immobilisers from late 2004; Manned Guards and Keyholders in 2005; and Security Consultants and Private Investigators in 2006.

The timetable for the introduction of the approved contractor scheme is under consideration by the Authority.

Probation Service

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact on the Probation Service of its April 2001 re-organisation. [163108]

Paul Goggins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1285W.

Resettlement Programmes

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many and what percentage of long-term prisoners have completed a resettlement programme in each of the last 10 years; [163281]

(2) how many and what percentage of long-term prisoners serving a sentence for *(a)* burglary, *(b)* offences of violence and *(c)* drug related offences completed a resettlement programme in each of the last 10 years. [163284]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not available. Long-term prisoners are provided with a range of help with their resettlement needs prior to release. There is a particular focus on helping them secure employment and accommodation, through partnership working with employers, Jobcentre Plus and housing providers.

Up to 1,500 long-term prisoners at any time are able, subject to appropriate risk assessment, to undertake unpaid community work or training on day release under licence. Up to another 1,500 long-term prisoners at any time are able, subject to appropriate risk assessment, to undertake paid work in the community on day release under licence. These opportunities help the prisoners make a managed transition back to life in the community, as well as gaining skills and experience which will help them secure employment on release.

Secure Training Centres

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to alter the monitoring regime for secure training centres; and whether each secure training centre will continue to have a full-time on-site monitor. [163326]

Paul Goggins: Under section 8 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 each contracted-out secure training centre (STC) must have a monitor. There are no plans to change that requirement.

Since the first STC opened in 1998 the Home Office and the Youth Justice Board have built up substantial monitoring experience. We believe the lessons learned can and should be applied more widely across the juvenile secure estate. To do that the Youth Justice Board is introducing a new regional performance monitoring regime. This will cover STCs alongside Young Offender Institutions and Local Authority Secure Children's Homes.

The nominated STC monitors will combine their STC role with other, regional performance monitoring; they will be supported by assistant monitors on-site; and as part of the changes STC monitoring will be strengthened

by including along with contract compliance the reception and induction arrangements, key performance indicators, key safeguarding indicators and safety tests.

Suicide (Websites)

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received concerning the presence of websites and internet chatrooms that promote suicide; and if he will make a statement. [161080]

Paul Goggins: In the last 12 months the Home Office has received representations about two cases of suicide in which these websites are alleged to have been a contributing factor.

Winchester/Edmunds Hill Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the decision was made to move women prisoners from *(a)* Winchester and *(b)* Edmunds Hill prisons; how many women prisoners are to be moved; and to which prisons they are being sent. [162626]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* The announcement on 11 March 2004 closely followed the decision to re-role HMP Edmunds Hill and the West Hill wing at HMP Winchester, as a prompt response to changing population pressures. There was a short delay in the announcement to allow for staff in these establishments to be informed of the decision before the information became public. Decisions on where prisoners will be moved to will be made on an individual basis, to help ensure that each prisoner is held at an establishment that is appropriate for their needs.

As at 11 March 2004, there were a total of 364 female prisoners in HMP Edmunds Hill and the West Hill wing of HMP Winchester. Those who have not reached their release date by the time the re-role occurs will be transferred to other establishments.

Wormwood Scrubs

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in implementing the recommendations made in internal inquiry reports relating to allegations of prison officer abuse at Wormwood Scrubs; and if he will make a statement. [162664]

Paul Goggins: The Governor at Wormwood Scrubs has implemented the recommendations that have emerged from various completed inquiries and, aided by the Area Manager, ensures that current arrangements are regularly monitored and audited.

Recommendations relating to Wormwood Scrubs, but implemented nationally include:

Setting up a Professional Standards Unit to monitor all investigative and disciplinary processes and to oversee staff corruption issues.

Introducing new investigative procedures.

Developing more effective audit processes of all functions in prisons including segregation units.

Adopting robust policies on alcohol consumption during duty hours including closure of staff clubs.

Streamlining new selection and succession planning for managers.

Developing new partnership arrangements with Health Care trusts that provide improved care for prisoners.

Improving the Area Manager/Governor line management arrangements.

Improving grievance procedures and introducing systems that ensure the integrity of the processes.

Introducing better training for investigators.

Young Offenders

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many hours per week were spent, on average, by inmates in young offenders institutions *(a)* in educational activities, *(b)* on physical exercise and *(c)* in their cells in 2003. [158788]

Paul Goggins: During the current financial year to February 2004, prisoners in Young Offender Institutions undertook an average of 7.1 hours of education activity per week and 3.9 hours of physical exercise. This average is suppressed by the number of prisoners held on remand or unsentenced who are not obliged to participate in educational activities.

The length of time prisoners spent in their cells is not collected routinely.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether placement conferences are routinely held to decide in which penal institution children should be held. [162277]

Paul Goggins: The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) has overall responsibility for placement in the juvenile secure estate. There are three types of accommodation—Young Offender Institutions, Secure Training Centres and Local Authority Secure Children's Homes.

Where a young person is remanded to custody the YJB places them in the young offender institution serving the court they are appearing at.

If a young person receives a detention and training order the YJB decides which establishment is most appropriate, taking into account their age and maturity and the vulnerability assessment made by the youth offending team.

Young people sentenced under sections 90 or 91 of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 are placed by the Juvenile Group at Prison Service Headquarters , in consultation with the YJB .

Conferences are not routinely held to decide each placement, but all are reviewed by the youth offending team officer and the establishment . The YJB arranges transfers where more suitable placements are identified.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether juveniles who reach the age of 18 while serving a detention and training order are automatically transferred out of the juvenile prison estate. [162278]

Paul Goggins: Juveniles who reach the age of 18 while serving a detention and training order will normally remain in the juvenile prison estate until their transfer to the community.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures are in place to ensure that children who are part way through GCSE courses when they are received into prison can continue their courses. [162281]

Paul Goggins: Education departments within prisons are registered with examination boards for the delivery of a number of core curriculum subjects for children who are taking GCSEs. Schools and young offender institutions work together to offer opportunities for progress to those who have already commenced GCSEs and to ensure they continue with their courses in the community on release.

If a GCSE subject is more unusual and cannot be supported in custody to GCSE standard, then either specialist teaching staff are brought in or alternative GCSEs or accreditation opportunities such as in Key Skills level 2 are offered.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which prisons in the juvenile estate give night-time breakfast packs to inmates. [162282]

Paul Goggins: Of the establishments in the Prison Service juvenile estate, Eastwood Park, Lancaster Farms and New Hall routinely provide night-time breakfast packs as a matter of course. Bullwood Hall, Hindley, Huntercombe and Stoke Heath provide them in certain circumstances, for example where a young person has to be produced in court early the next morning.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure that young offenders are detained near their *(a)* homes and *(b)* families. [162312]

Paul Goggins: In its management of the prison population, the Prison Service aims to hold prisoners in establishments that provide the degree of security they require, are suitable for their gender, age and legal status, provide special facilities appropriate to prisoner needs, and are near to their homes or the courts dealing with their cases. Sentenced young offenders have to be held separately from adult prisoners

Considerable emphasis is also placed on encouraging all prisoners, including young offenders, to maintain their family ties. We recognise that this helps them to achieve a better transition from custody to resettlement, and is therefore an important factor in reducing re-offending.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 328W, on young offender institutions, which establishments are equipped with *(a)* unfurnished cells and *(b)* other types of special accommodation. [162437]

Paul Goggins: Special accommodation includes cells designated as 'special' or 'unfurnished'. The following establishments in the juvenile estate are equipped with special accommodation:

Ashfield
Brinsford
Bullwood Hall
Castington
Feltham
Hindley
Huntercombe
Lancaster Farms
New Hall
Parc
Stoke Heath
Warren Hill
Werrington
Wetherby

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1262W, on juvenile prisoners, for what reasons the use of unfurnished cells was judged to be unnecessary at *(a)* Eastwood Park, *(b)* Holloway, *(c)* Huntercombe, *(d)* Lancaster Farms, *(e)* Parc, *(f)* Thorn Cross, *(g)* Warren Hill, *(h)* Werrington and *(i)* Wetherby. [162439]

Paul Goggins: Special accommodation may be used for the temporary confinement of a violent or refractory prisoner, but only if its use:

(i) Is necessary in order to prevent the prisoner causing self-injury, injuring another prisoner or staff, or damaging property, or creating a disturbance; and

(ii) Has been properly approved (i.e. No prisoner shall be placed in special accommodation except on the prior authority of the Governor/Controller in charge).

These establishments did not use unfurnished cells between January 2002 and December 2003 for one or more of the following reasons:

(i) They do not have unfurnished cells, or they use special cells or ordinary segregation accommodation;

(ii) Staff were able, on the basis of individual risk assessment, to deal with the violent or refractory behaviour by means other than using special accommodation.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1262W, on juvenile prisoners, what the *(a)* average number of hours and *(b)* longest number of hours spent in unfurnished cells was at (i) Castington, (ii) Feltham, (iii) Hindley and (iv) Stoke Heath in 2003. [162440]

Paul Goggins: Castington did not use unfurnished cells during 2003. Data on the average length of time and the longest length of time spent in unfurnished cells at Feltham, Hindley and Stoke Heath young offender institutions in 2003, is shown in the following table.

Establishment	*Average number of hours*	*Longest number of hours*
Feltham	1 hour 5 minutes	4 hours 30 minutes
Hindley	45 minutes	1 hour 15 minutes
Stoke Heath	7 hours 1 minute	20 hours 45 minutes

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many attacks there were on

prison officers in each young offenders' institution in each month from June 2003 to the most recent month for which figures are available. [163211]

Ms Blears: The number of assaults on prison officers in each young offender's institution is detailed in the table.

Establishment name	2003 June	July	August	September	October	November	December	2004 January	February	March
Aylesbury	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Brinsford	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Castington	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Deerbolt	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Feltham	—	1	—	—	1	—	1	—	1	—
Glen Parva	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hindley	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lancaster Farms	—	—	1	—	—	—	2	—	1	—
Northallerton	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Onley	2	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—
Portland	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Reading	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rochester	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Stoke Heath	2	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Swinfen Hall	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Thorn Cross	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Warren Hill	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

The Prison Service categorises establishments by their main role. Establishments that have more than one role are placed in the category that represents the primary or dominant function of the prison. The establishments referred to in the answer are categorised as Young Offender Institutes as they hold a predominantly Young Offender population.

Prison Visiting

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there is a limit on the number of children who may visit a parent in prison. [162279]

Paul Goggins: There is no limit on the number of children who are able to attend social visits in prisons. However, prisons with fixed, rather than freestanding furniture in their visits halls sometimes experience difficulties in accommodating larger families together. In these instances, there is an expectation that establishments will be flexible and make appropriate arrangements to assist them.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on visits to prisoners in Highpoint prison by more than three of their children at any one time. [162280]

Paul Goggins: The prisoner visits booking system currently in use at Highpoint prison allows for one main visitor over 18 years old, two further visitors over the age of 10 and up to four children under the age of 10. A new system is shortly to be introduced which will raise the number of children able to visit to nine.

Youth Offending Teams

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total budget allocated to youth offending teams is for *(a)* drugs and *(b)* alcohol programmes in 2003–04. [162612]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* In 2003–04 the Youth Justice Board paid £8.5 million in grant support to Youth Offending Teams for substance misuse work, which includes drugs and alcohol problems. It does not set separate amounts for each type of problem.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Association of British Insurers

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will ask a third party to examine the accuracy and impartiality of the information the Association of British Insurers is collating on the separation of long tail disease risk and accident risk, as referred to in his Department's Second Stage Report on the review of Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance. [163200]

Mr. Browne: As well as the Government's consideration of this work we understand that the Association of British Insurers (ABI) is consulting with a wide range of third parties including the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF), the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and the Trades Union Congress (TUC).

Benefits Reforms (Scotland)

Mr. Roy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had concerning the introduction of Jobcentre Plus to Scotland. [160271]

Mr. Browne: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Roy, dated 25 March 2004:

As Jobcentre Plus is an Executive Agency, the Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning what discussions have taken place concerning the introduction of Jobcentre Plus to Scotland. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus came into existence as a national organisation at the beginning of April 2002. The Benefits Agency and Employment Service ceased to exist at the same time. The new service is being rolled out across England, Wales and Scotland on a district by district basis. Nearly 400 integrated Jobcentre Plus offices are now operating across the country, 33 of which are in Scotland. Integrating the whole of the former Employment Service and Benefits Agency's services for people of working age and creating the national network of Jobcentre Plus offices will not be completed until 2006.

During 2002–2003, 23 offices were successfully introduced across Grampian, Moray, Orkney and Shetland District and Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute District. Implementation is ongoing in Glasgow, Lothian and Borders and Tayside Districts. Rollout planning schedules are at an advanced stage for the remaining Districts; Ayrshire Dumfries and Galloway, Edinburgh, Fife, Forth Valley and Dunbartonshire Highlands and Western Isles and Lanarkshire. Our aim is to complete rollout of Jobcentre Plus throughout Scotland by 2006.

As each district starts to plan for the introduction of the new integrated Jobcentre Plus, service delivery arrangements are shared with local stakeholders, MPs and others. The service delivery arrangements are shared at the initial proposal stage, amended to take account of comments received where appropriate, then shared again when approval for the plans has been given. This is an integral part of the planning process for the introduction of the Jobcentre Plus service across England, Wales and Scotland.

District Managers are provided with a list of suggested stakeholders for this initial planning stage. These include; local MPs/MEPs/MSPs/Members of the National Assembly of Wales, Local Authorities, programme providers/service delivery partners, employers, Citizens Advice Bureaux, and welfare rights organisations. This list is not exhaustive and each District Manager may identify their own local stakeholders.

As part of the consultation process District Managers may also canvass the opinions of their customers and any comments they provide will be used as part of the planning process. We also take account of views expressed by stakeholders representing groups such as unemployed workers and pensioners. Any concerns or issues raised by these groups as a result of the consultation process will be addressed at district level and are fed in to each district's planning before the final decision is made for roll out of Jobcentre Plus in that district.

Jobcentre Plus managers at all levels maintain close contact with many local and national organisations representing our client base. This enables continuous feedback concerning the services that we provide before, during and after the roll out of the new Jobcentre Plus services.

Company Stakeholder Pension Schemes

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on action taken in relation to companies who are unable to find an insurer to set up a company stakeholder pension scheme with. [163132]

Malcolm Wicks: The Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority (Opra) is responsible for regulating compliance with the requirement for employers to offer access to stakeholder pension schemes.

Opra has not found any cases, or received any reports, of employers being non-compliant with the requirement because they could not find a suitable stakeholder pension scheme provider. Opra is satisfied that there is an adequate number of schemes open to employers, so no specific action is required. Opra is monitoring the position.

If an employer is required to designate a stakeholder pension scheme for their employees they should first check the register of stakeholder pension schemes on Opra's website which will give addresses of providers. This also gives details of restrictions on membership and availability to designate.

Departmental Policies (Hackney)

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the impact of his Department's policies on the constituency of Hackney, North and Stoke Newington since 1997. [162290]

Mr. Browne: The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001; since then, we have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it from a passive organisation paying out benefits to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

We are making a significant contribution to the Government's objective of eradicating child poverty in 20 years and halving it within 10, and there are now half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1997. Child Benefit is now worth £16.05 a week for the eldest child, compared to only £11.40 in 1997, benefiting 13,200 families in Hackney, North and Stoke Newington.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.27 million. Unemployment in Hackney, North and Stoke Newington has halved and long-term unemployment has fallen by over 75 per cent.

Our New Deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of the unemployed to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1,029,000 people have been helped into work by the New Deals, and over 9,500 have been helped into work in Hackney, North and Stoke Newington.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country, and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending an extra £10 billion in 2004–05 on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997; this is £6 billion more than an earnings link would have given them. Almost half the extra spending, around £5 billion, is going to the poorest third of pensioners.

Pension Credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for modest savings and income. Around 4,559 pensioner households in Hackney, North and Stoke Newington are already benefiting from Pension Credit, with an average award of £69.81 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty, and this winter (2003–04) we have made available a Winter Fuel Payment of £200 for each eligible household to help with their fuel bills. In

addition, the introduction of the 80 plus annual payment gives an extra £100 to households where there is someone aged 80 or over. So far 10,120 older people in Hackney, North and Stoke Newington have received a payment this winter; of those 1,865 have received the 80 plus annual payment.

On 17 March, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his Budget statement, announced a £100 pension payment to households with someone aged over 70, to help with council tax bills.

Some 8,900 pensioners in Hackney, North and Stoke Newington benefited from the above inflation increase in the rate of basic state pension from April 2003. Those over 75, of whom we estimate there are about 3,700 in Hackney, North and Stoke Newington, may also qualify for free TV licences.

Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received from *(a)* individual businesses and *(b)* trade associations on difficulties in accessing affordable employers' liability compulsory insurance cover since December 2003. [162657]

Mr. Browne: The Department has received seven representations from individual businesses and five representations form trade associations on difficulties in accessing affordable employers' liability compulsory insurance cover since December 2003.

In addition the Department continues to discuss these issues with business representatives and trade associations on a regular basis.

EU Accession Countries

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate the Government have made of how many EU accession country citizens will make use of the benefits system in the UK. [157345]

Mr. Pond: A number of studies have been published which offer estimates of the number of people coming to the United Kingdom from the EU accession countries, but these do not take into account the measures announced on 23 February by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and the steps we are taking to publicise them in the countries most concerned. Consequently no precise estimate of the numbers likely to travel to the UK and claim benefits has been made.

Health and Safety

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many inspectors have been employed by the Health and Safety Executive in each year since 1997; and what the forecast number is for the current year. [155818]

Mr. Browne: The table contains the information on the number of inspectors employed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on 1 April for the years 1997 to 2003; and the planned number for 1 April 2004.

Inspectors employed by HSE

	Number
1997	1,442
1998	1,437
1999	1,497
2000	1,507
2001	1,534
2002	1,625
2003	1,651
2004	[1]1,657

[1] Planned number.

Pension Centre Staffing

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many full-time equivalent departmental staff are employed in each pension centre. [160349]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested (up to the end of February 2004) is in the table.

	Full-time equivalent staff
Derby	301.05
Leicester	278.00
Nottingham	214.29
Norwich Baltic	280.74
Norwich Kingfisher	269.41
London Pension Centre (Glasgow)	517.96
London Pension Centre (Newcastle)	626.92
Dearne Valley	436.22
Seaham	364.32
Stockton	313.10
York	304.83
Burnley	582.14
Stockport	713.93
Warrington	467.91
Dundee	534.18
Motherwell	466.29
Blackpool	191.16
Liverpool	267.29
Cwmbran	242.92
Wrexham	387.09
Bath	406.57
Plymouth	383.87
Swansea	542.05
Birmingham	358.49
Walsall	264.71
Wolverhampton	390.00

Pension Service (IT Facilities)

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether local Pension Service staff have IT facilities *(a)* to view customers' details and *(b)* to record ongoing action on the Pension Service database whilst conducting (i) a home visit and (ii) a surgery; what the average time taken for the appropriate pension centre (A) to input this information and (B) to amend existing records on the main database is; and if he will make a statement. [160354]

Malcolm Wicks: Currently The Pension Service local service staff do not have the IT facilities to enable electronic access to customer benefit details or to record ongoing action while conducting a home visit or surgery.

Local service staff do have access to laptop computers and a programme is underway to provide all DWP laptop users with secure remote access to the full IT facilities, including customer benefit details.

Prior to any booked appointment the local service member of staff will preview the customer's details and take any necessary information to the visit or surgery. During the visit or surgery if further information is required staff are equipped with mobile telephones with which they can contact their office for assistance.

The Pension Service does not collect information on each stage of its processing. The organisation has published its handling targets in The Pension Service Business Plan for 2003–04.

Pensions

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the Government's target in respect of funded pensions. [161205]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government are committed to continuing their strategy which balances fairness and affordability by targeting state support at those who need it most while encouraging private funded provision for those who can afford to save and rewarding those who have done so.

The Pensions Bill, introduced to the House in February is one part of our programme of reform which bolsters protection for pension scheme members through the introduction of the Pension Protection Fund and The Pensions Regulator. These measures, if approved, will provide people with increased confidence that a pension they have saved will be delivered.

In addition, Simplicity, security and choice: Informed choices for working and saving (Cm 6111) set out the action this Government are taking to empower individuals to take control of their retirement planning.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what *(a)* temporary and *(b)* permanent changes to the level of written evidence needed to support an application for pension credit have been implemented by his Department; and if he will make a statement; [163292]

(2) if it is his Department's policy to require written evidence of the value of *(a)* occupational pensions, *(b)* premium bonds and *(c)* income tax payments when assessing pension credit applications; and if he will make a statement. [163293]

Malcolm Wicks: Applications for Pension Credit are assessed on the basis that the decision maker must decide, on the balance of probability, whether the information given in the application is correct. As a general rule, written evidence is required of income and of savings and investments above 6,000 (or 10,000, for someone in a care home). Written evidence will normally be required, where relevant, of occupational pensions, premium bonds of 100 or more and income tax deductions.

Our aim is to ensure that Pension Credit is easy to apply for and we continually review our processes to ensure that this is so. We have listened to comments from customers, pension providers and staff and have introduced a number of relatively minor changes to the written evidence which we require. These include, where appropriate, applying an automatic increase to non-state second pensions, where customers are unable to provide details of the rate and date of any proposed increase, inferring the current amount and frequency of non-state second pensions from bank statements and accepting photocopies of documents such as bank statements, savings books and wage slips if the customer is unable or unwilling to provide originals. The changes have been introduced through normal business practices and are subject to ongoing evaluation.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost to the Exchequer, net of savings in means-tested benefits and additional income tax revenues, of paying a full basic state retirement pension to every individual aged 65 or over, regardless of contribution record, at the rate of the guarantee credit and subsequently indexed to earnings, in each of the next five financial years, assuming that no new rights accrue to the state second pension and that no new rights accrue to the savings credit from the date of implementation of the scheme. [163714]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is in the table.

	Net cost (£ billion)
2004–05	9.2
2005–06	9.4
2006–07	9.9
2007–08	10.5
2008–09	11.1

Notes:

1. Figures are for Great Britain in 2003–04 price terms rounded to the nearest £100 million. It is assumed the change comes into effect from April 2004 and payment is uprated in line with earnings thereafter.
2. Gross costs are estimated by the Government Actuary's Department and are consistent with Budget 2004 assumptions and use 2002 based population projections.
3. The costs take into account income related benefit offsets, which are calculated using the DWP policy simulation model and April 2004 benefit rates.
4. Additional income tax revenue is estimated by the Inland Revenue using 2004 tax rates.
5. The savings from abolishing the State Second Pension are calculated by the Government Actuary's Department and are consistent with the long term Public Expenditure Survey forecasts. No allowance has been made for changes to contracting out rules.
6. The savings credit is assumed to be frozen, payments uprated by prices, with no new recipients after 2004. Figures for 2004 and 2005 are based on published medium term forecasts, while those for 2006–07 and beyond are based on the illustrative long-term projections of benefit expenditure underlying Annex A of the Budget report.

Unemployment (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps are being taken to aid job placement for the unemployed in Wales. [160925]

Mr. Browne: Our active labour market policies ensure people can take advantage of the many job opportunities coming up all the time. This is especially true for those most disadvantaged; the long-term unemployed, lone parents, people with disabilities and older workers.

The development of Jobcentre Plus is building on the high quality service already provided by social security offices and Jobcentres by delivering a single, integrated service to all people of working age, with a clear focus on work. The introduction of work-focused interviews

enables more people to take advantage of the increasing opportunities to move into work by, for the first time, offering everyone of working age advice and guidance on the full range of Jobcentre Plus programmes. In the year up to January 2004 Jobcentre Plus had been notified of 200,000 vacancies in Wales.

There are currently 1.31 million people in work in Wales. This is an increase of 28,000 over the last year and of 100,000 since 1997. Our New Deal has helped over 63,000 people into employment in Wales and our Employment Zones and Action Teams have additionally helped more than 1,600 of the hardest to help people in to work.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how the Interim Election Commission, the Joint Electoral Coordination Office and the Coalition intend to address the effects of *(a)* cultural barriers to female participation, *(b)* low literacy rates and *(c)* the current number of electoral registration offices outside Kabul in ensuring full voter registration and participation in Afghanistan. [162928]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Women are being encouraged to participate in the electoral process through specially targeted civic education programmes and the use of all-women voter registration teams to register women. In order to overcome the low literacy rates in Afghanistan, voter education programmes are using a wide range of media to provide information on the electoral process including television, radio, public meetings and graphic posters.

A number of regional voter registration centres have now closed having completed the process in the larger population centres. As of 22 March 2004, 60 centres were in operation outside Kabul. This will increase to a total of 4,200 centres when the accelerated registration begins in May.

Climate Change

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent work his Department has carried out to assess the international security implications of climate change; and if he will make a statement. [162885]

Mr. Rammell: Helping to launch new action to reinvigorate the international response to climate change is one of the specific aims set out in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Strategy published in December 2003. A copy of which is available in the Library of the House. Potential linkages between climate change and international security include increased pressure on food and water resources and energy supplies, which in turn (and in combination with other factors) may contribute to the causes of migration, instability and conflict. FCO policies and diplomatic work to promote effective international action against climate change are underpinned by our belief that the global costs of inaction would be high.

The FCO has been involved in work co-ordinated by DEFRA to identify how policy and operational responsibilities could be affected by climate change. Where appropriate, we consider climate change along with other environmental issues in formulating policy on international and security issues. Through our network of overseas Posts, we have disseminated to wider international audiences modelling produced in the UK on climate change impacts scenarios. Within the EU, we have supported efforts to integrate disaster prevention into EU development and environmental priorities. We believe that this work will help to increase understanding of adverse impacts of climate change internationally.

Cyprus

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what policy response the Government will make to the proposals by the Turkish authorities in the North of Cyprus seeking further derogations to the EU acquis as a precondition to their agreement to a settlement in Cyprus; whether the Government have communicated the proposals to the Government of Turkey; and if he will make a statement. [163244]

Mr. MacShane: The UK is working to support the UN Secretary-General's good offices mission in Cyprus and, along with other members of the European Council, has declared its readiness to accommodate the terms of a Cyprus settlement in line with the principles upon which the EU is founded.

Once a settlement is finalised and approved by both communities it will be for the European Union to accommodate those arrangements, in order for a reunited Cyprus to join the EU on 1 May. The EU should not become an obstacle to a settlement that has been agreed by the parties themselves.

The UK has not communicated any proposals from the Turkish authorities in northern Cyprus to the Turkish Government.

Eritrea/Ethiopia

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the *(a)* Eritrean and *(b)* Ethiopian Governments observe the rulings of the Independent Boundary Commission; and what action it is taking where these rulings are ignored. [163367]

Mr. Mullin: The UK, and other members of the Security Council, will continue to press Ethiopia to accept the Boundary Commission decision, which is final and binding, and begin a comprehensive political dialogue on all of the issues separating them. We have welcomed the appointment of the UN Special Envoy, Lloyd Axworthy, and are urging both parties to work with him on resolving their differences.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent involvement the UK Government has had in the dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia. [163403]

Mr. Mullin: I most recently discussed the border dispute with the Eritrean ambassador, together with a visiting representative of the Eritrean Government, on 18 March 2004 I also discussed the border with Eritrean President Isaias in Asmara on 15 January 2004 and with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles in Addis Ababa on 16 January 2004. On each of these occasions I reiterated to the parties that the Boundary Commission's decision is final and binding and urged them to engage in political dialogue on all of the issues separating them.

EU Budget

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs under what powers payments by the United Kingdom to the European Union budget are made. [161395]

Ruth Kelly: I have been asked to reply.

United Kingdom contributions to the EC budget are made under the European Communities Act 1972 as amended. This provides the framework within which the UK makes payments required by or under the Treaties listed in section 1(2) of that Act.

European Court of Human Rights

Mr. David Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* petitions were received and *(b)* cases were dealt with by the European Court of Human Rights in the latest year for which figures are available; and how many and what percentage of each total related to each Council of Europe member state. [162768]

Mr. MacShane: The information requested is as follows.

(a) 30,828 applications were received in 2002 by the European Court of Human Rights;

(b) 18,765 cases were dealt with in the same year (844 judgments, 17,349 applications declared inadmissible, and 530 applications struck off).

A breakdown of how many and what percentage of the total relate to each Council of Europe member state is as follows:

Applications received

State	*Applications 2002*	*Percentage of cases per member state*
Albania	19	0.061
Andorra	—	
Armenia	21	0.068
Austria	400	1.297
Azerbaijan	123	0.398
Belgium	247	0.801
Bosnia and Herzegovina	32	0.103
Bulgaria	588	1.907
Croatia	757	2.455
Cyprus	37	0.12
Czech Republic	465	1.508
Denmark	120	0.389
Estonia	104	0.337
Finland	222	0.72
France	2,789	9.046
Georgia	37	0.12
Germany	1,668	5.41
Greece	351	1.138
Hungary	263	0.853
Iceland	5	0.016
Ireland	85	0.275
Italy	1,304	4.25
Latvia	256	0.83
Liechtenstein	3	0.009
Lithuania	422	1.368
Luxembourg	44	0.142
Malta	9	0.029
Moldova	221	0.716
Netherlands	562	1.823
Norway	76	0.246
Poland	4,173	13.536
Portugal	245	0.794
Romania	1,927	6.25
Russia	4,006	12.994
San Marino	5	0.016
Slovak Republic	418	1.355
Slovenia	256	0.83
Spain	797	2.585
Sweden	357	1.158
Switzerland	275	0.892
FYRO Macedonia	86	0.278
Turkey	3,036	9.848
Ukraine	2,549	8.268
United Kingdom	1,468	4.761
Total	30,828	100

Cases dealt with[1]

State	*2002*	*Percentage of judgments per member state*
Albania	—	—
Andorra	—	—
Armenia	—	—
Austria	20	2.3697
Azerbaijan	—	—
Belgium	14	1.658
Bosnia and Herzegovina	—	—
Bulgaria	3	0.355
Croatia	9	1.066
Cyprus	6	0.71
Czech Republic	4	0.473
Denmark	2	0.236
Estonia	1	0.118
Finland	5	0.592
France	75	8.886
Georgia	—	—
Germany	9	1.066
Greece	25	2.962
Hungary	3	0.355
Iceland	—	—
Ireland	1	0.118
Italy	391	46.327
Latvia	2	0.236
Liechtenstein	—	—
Lithuania	5	0.592
Luxembourg	1	0.118
Malta	—	—
Moldova	—	—
Netherlands	11	1.3033
Norway	—	—
Poland	26	3.08
Portugal	33	3.909
Romania	27	3.199
Russia	2	0.236
San Marino	—	0.016
Slovak Republic	7	0.829
Slovenia	1	0.118
Spain	3	0.355
Sweden	7	0.829
Switzerland	4	0.473
FYRO Macedonia	1	0.118

Cases dealt with[1]

State	*2002*	*Percentage of judgments per member state*
Turkey	105	12.44
Ukraine	1	0.118
United Kingdom	40	4.739
Total	844	100

[1] Breakdown available only for judgments.

Government Hospitality

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost to public funds is of the Government Hospitality Advisory Committee for the purchase of wine, in the current financial year. [162731]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 24 March 2004]:* The Government Hospitality Advisory Committee for the Purchase of Wine cost approximately £6,000 in the financial year 2003–04. The work of the Committee is managed by an established civil servant, whose salary is paid by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Kosovo

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the security situation in the Kosovo towns of *(a)* Mitrovica, *(b)* Orahovac and *(c)* Pristina. [163393]

Mr. Straw: Kosovo Force (KFOR) reports that the situation in these towns is calm but tense. We have called upon all the leaders in Kosovo and Belgrade to show restraint and use their influence to calm the situation. It is important that they continue to work with KFOR and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo to build a stable, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is on the future of Kosovo within a Serbia-Montenegro federation. [163394]

Mr. Straw: Our policy on Kosovo is based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) and the UN endorsed review process of agreed standards, launched in December 2003. As part of this there will be a formal review of Kosovo's progress in meeting the agreed standards in mid 2005. If it were positive, but only if, it could allow a process to begin to determine Kosovo's future status.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the reconstruction programme required in Kosovo; and if he will make a statement. [163395]

Mr. Straw: The UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) and the NATO Force for Kosovo are in the process of assessing the damage caused by the recent violence and. the extent of the reconstruction programme required. The PISG has announced the allocation of Kosovo funds to rebuild Serb Churches and homes.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received from the Serbia and Montenegro Government regarding Prime Minister Kostunica's proposal for the cantonisation of Kosovo. [163396]

Mr. Straw: We have received no such representations from Serbia and Montenegro. However, on a number of occasions since taking office on 3 March 2004, Serbian Prime Minister Kostunica has stated publicly his Government's preference for the decentralisation of Kosovo through entities or cantons to ensure the security of the Serb community in Kosovo.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is on the Kosovo Serbs' proposal regarding establishment of Serb enclaves within Kosovo. [163397]

Mr. Straw: We are not aware of any formal proposal by the Kosovo Serbs regarding establishment of Serb enclaves within Kosovo.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met his counterparts from other EU member states to discuss matters relating to the security situation in *(a)* Kosovo and *(b)* Serbia and Montenegro. [163398]

Mr. Straw: On 22 March 2004.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent to which the borders between *(a)* Kosovo and Albania and *(b)* Kosovo and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are adequately secured; and who controls them. [163399]

Mr. Straw: Responsibility for border control points in Kosovo is held by the Kosovo Police Service under the authority of the UN Interim Administrative Mission in Kosovo. Responsibility for the border security of Kosovo, including adjacent to the border with Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, rests with the NATO-led Kosovo Force. On the Macedonian side of the border, responsibility for border crossing points rests with the Macedonian Border Police, and for the rest of the border with the First Army Brigade. On the Albanian side of the border, the Albanian Police are responsible for border control. We assess that Kosovo's borders with both Albania and Macedonia are adequately secured.

Kurds (Iraq)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the US and international community that *(a)* Saddam Hussein and *(b)* Ali Hassan Al-Majid be charged under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article II in respect of the massacre of Kurds at Halabja and through the Anfal campaign. [162190]

Mr. Rammell: On 10 December 2003, the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) established the Iraqi Special Tribunal to try major crimes committed under the former Ba'athist regime. The Transitional Administrative Law signed on 8 March 2004 confirms the establishment of the Tribunal.

Article 10 of the Statute of the Tribunal gives it jurisdiction over the crime of genocide which is defined (in Article 11) in accordance with the Genocide Convention. Although it is for the Iraqis to decide what charges will be brought against Saddam Hussein and Ali Hassan Al-Majid we expect that the charges would involve incidents such as the 1988 attack on Halabja and the Anfal campaign.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the international community regarding *(a)* the integrity of Iraq's borders and *(b)* the need to ensure Kurdish security in respect of Turkey and Iran; and if he will make a statement. [162192]

Mr. Rammell: We are committed to maintaining the territorial integrity of Iraq, as re-affirmed in UN Security Council Resolution 1511. We have been in regular contact with Iraq's neighbours to urge them to take steps to ensure better security on their borders with Iraq. We have been working hard to improve border security through increased personnel, new technology and tighter procedures. There are currently 8,000 Iraqi border police in place and the Coalition is aiming to double this number. In the north the US military have taken on this role in the Kurdistan Regional Government administered areas.

Opinion Sampling

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his estimate is of total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* focus groups and *(b)* opinion polls in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [162750]

Mr. Rammell: Focus groups and internal/external opinion polls are not managed centrally. The subject of the group or poll would determine which department within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) managed it. For example, the FCO's Information Directorate (responsible for explaining UK foreign policy, creating systems to deliver this information, both internally and to the public, and the development of relationships with the FCO's key partners in shaping and communicating policy) spent £311,000 on focus groups and polls in 2003–04. To collate all costs relating to groups and polls would incur disproportionate costs.

Pakistan

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assurances he has received from Pakistan regarding the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. [161210]

Mr. MacShane: During recent discussions with the Pakistani Government, assurances were given that Pakistan would investigate fully the past proliferation activities of Abdul Qadeer Khan and those associated with him. They have also undertaken to make changes to the system of control of their nuclear programme in order to prevent the future transfer of technology.

Press Officers

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many press officers were employed in his Department in each year from 1990–91 to 2003–04; what the total cost was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [162849]

Mr. Rammell: The number of UK based press officers working in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Press Office in 2003–04 is 17 and their cost for the year is estimated to be £738,353. Costs comprise salary, employer's national insurance contributions and employer's pension contributions. There are further press officers based at overseas posts however their numbers and costs could be obtained only at disproportionate costs. For years prior to 2003–04 I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 23 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 469W.

Taiwan

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received from the People's Republic of China concerning Her Majesty's Government's policy towards Taiwan; and if he will make a statement. [163204]

Mr. Rammell: The People's Republic of China raises Her Majesty's Government's Taiwan policy regularly at official and ministerial level. During his visit on 1–11 March Chinese vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui discussed Taiwan with my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary.

The UK's position on Taiwan status remains unchanged. We believe the question of Taiwan is a matter for the people on both sides of the Taiwan straits to settle peacefully among themselves.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on *(a)* the weapons of mass destruction held by Israel and *(b)* that nation's (i) entry into and (ii) adherence to international agreements on such weapons. [162306]

Mr. Rammell: The Government continue to urge Israel to resolve international speculation about its possession of weapons of mass destruction by acceding to the relevant international Treaties.

The Government support the creation of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and urges all states, both in the region and elsewhere, to accede to, and adhere to, all the International Treaties and Conventions covering such weapons.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Department-Funded Programmes

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much funding has been allocated in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* in total to (i) the Community Empowerment Fund, (ii) the Single Regeneration Budget and (iii) urban regeneration companies. [163655]

Yvette Cooper: Community Empowerment Fund Budget allocations for the Community Empowerment Fund are tabled as follows, broken down by English region:

Budget allocation to community empowerment fund

£

Region	2003–04	2004–05	Total
East	228,033	228,033	456,066
East Midlands	905,245	905,245	1,810,490
London	2,654,485	2,654,485	5,308,970
North East	1,824,502	1,824,502	3,649,004
North West	2,967,301	2,967,301	5,934,602
South East	436,573	436,573	873,146
South West	465,082	465,082	930,164
West Midlands	1,132,771	1,132,771	2,265,542
Yorks and Humber	1,386,008	1,386,008	2,772,016
All regions total	12,000,000	12,000,000	24,000,000

Single Regeneration Budget

In 2001, the Single Regeneration Budget was subsumed into the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) Single Programme ('Single Pot') from which RDAs will continue to fund existing SRB commitments. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's planned contribution to the RDA's Single Pot is £1,456 million for 2004–05 and £1,513 million for 2005–06, totalling £2,959 million over the two year period.

Urban Regeneration Companies (URCs)

Funding allocations for capital projects in each URC are not held centrally and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not fund urban regeneration companies directly. Each URC has its own set of funding partners, which finance the company. Budget allocations from the regional development agencies and English Partnerships, for the 2004–05 running costs of each URC, are set out in my written answer of 4 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1108W. Allocations for 2005–06 will be of a similar order.

Departmental Buildings

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will list the *(a)* address and *(b)* latest valuation of his Department's London-based building assets; and if he will make a statement; [156597]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the value of the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London; and if he will make a statement. [156598]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has two building assets in London, Burlington House, Piccadilly and the Queen Elizabeth II Conference centre. Although the latter is operated by an Agency of the Office, the building is held as an asset centrally.

The central block of Burlington House is owned freehold by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and is let on a long lease to the Royal Academy. It has a balance sheet value of nil.

The Quadrangle Buildings at Burlington House are also owned freehold, and are occupied by Learned Societies. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister envisages the continued presence of those Societies at Burlington House and discussions are continuing with them with a view to finalising the arrangement. The balance sheet value of the buildings is £1.35 million.

The current book value of the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre building is £24 million. This was derived through annual indexation changes to a full independent valuation of £20 million as at 1 April 1999. The building is due to be re-valued as at 1 April 2004.

Government Publicity

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of whether the leaflets *(a)* A new opportunity for Yorkshire and the Humber, *(b)* A new opportunity for the North West and *(c)* A new opportunity for the North East meet the criteria of the guidance on Government publicity and advertising; and if he will make a statement. [163657]

Mr. Raynsford: The information campaign to inform the public of the Government's intention to hold referendums in the three regions is being conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Guidance on the Work of the Government Information Service. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is satisfied that both the text and the design of all three leaflets meet the criteria of this guidance.

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department sought the opinion of the Electoral Commission before publishing the leaflets *(a)* A new opportunity for the North, *(b)* A new opportunity for the North West and *(c)* A new opportunity for Yorkshire and the Humber. [163658]

Mr. Raynsford: No. We are however in regular contact with the Electoral Commission on all matters relating to referendums on elected regional assemblies that are within their remit.

Housing Bill Consultation

Lynne Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list those respondents to the consultation on the Draft Housing Bill who were *(a)* in favour of and *(b)* against the requirements for local authorities to seek ministerial consent before introducing (i) additional licensing of houses in multiple occupation and (ii) designating an area for selective licensing. [163682]

Keith Hill: The following consultees were:

(a) in favour of the requirements to seek Ministerial consent before introducing additional licensing of houses in multiple occupation: Universities UK; British Property Federation;

(b) against such requirements: Nottingham city council;

(c) in favour of the requirement to seek Ministerial consent before designating an area for selective licensing: North East Housing Forum; Brian Butler Esq.; Universities UK; British Property Federation;

(d) against such requirements: Gateshead Metropolitan borough council; Greenwich London borough council; Reading borough council.

Housing Management/Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will assess the difference between the level of housing management and maintenance allowance for Brent council in 2003–04 calculated using national crime statistics and the level using more local crime statistics; [163362]

(2) for what reason crime levels used in the calculation of housing management and maintenance allowances are county-wide figures; and if he will use more local figures in such calculations; [163365]

(3) what assessment has been made of the impact of the new arrangements for housing management and maintenance allowances on the Government's child poverty strategy; [163370]

(4) if he will reflect the costs of administering a housing service to areas with high ethnic minority populations in the formula used to calculate management and maintenance allowances; [163371]

(5) if he will amend the management and maintenance allowance for housing revenue accounts to take account of overcrowding. [163372]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister made proposals to revise the calculation of management and maintenance allowances within Housing Revenue Account subsidy in a consultation paper published in July 2003. Following consultation the new methodology was adopted for 2004–05 and onwards.

The research underlying the proposals found that crime levels were a significant driver of an authority's relative need to spend. Although the original proposal was to use county-wide crime figures, respondents to the consultation suggested that appropriate figures were available at individual local authority level. In the calculation of the allowances for 2004–05, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister therefore calculated a relative crime rate for each individual local authority by comparing the recorded crime figures at the local and national level. County level figures were not used. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister plans to continue to use local authority level relative crime rates in future years.

The management and maintenance allowances for 2003–04 did not use the new methodology and therefore did not include any crime figures. As both the national and local figure feeds into the calculation for 2004–05, it is not possible to compare the difference between allowances using either one of these figures. Using the methodology as outlined, the combined allowance for Brent for 2004–05 after transitional protection is £1,892.85 per dwelling.

With data currently available, it is not possible to assess the direct impact of the new arrangements on the Government's Child Poverty Strategy. However, the new methodology is widely recognised as achieving a better allocation of resources across all authorities, and the overall increase in resources for local authority management and maintenance has been welcomed as recognising the important role that housing management plays in meeting a number of the Government's priorities.

In discussions with the local authority associations, the extra costs associated with administering a housing service in areas with high ethnic minority populations were cited as costs of dealing with the consequences of racial harassment and also translation and interpretation costs. The use of the local recorded crime rate is intended to cover issues around the former. It was not possible to include the latter as there is a lack of robust data both on the numbers of languages spoken in each authority and on the actual size of the additional costs incurred.

There are no plans to review the allowances to take account of overcrowding.

Local Authority Standards Committees

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether central funding is available for training for members of local authority standards committees. [163375]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister funds the Standards Board for England, one of whose roles is to issue guidance to authorities on matters relating to the conduct of members of authorities. The Board has produced a range of guidance to assist members of standards boards to carry out their role. The aim is for local authorities to base the training they provide to members on guidance and advice from the Standards Board.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment has been made of the training offered to members of local authority standards committees. [163376]

Mr. Raynsford: Recent research commissioned by the Standards Board for England, one of whose roles is to issue guidance to authorities on matters relating to the conduct of members of authorities, has indicated a high level of satisfaction with the guidance and advice provided by the Board. For example, 82 per cent. of people questioned said they were very or fairly satisfied with the published information and guidance.

Local Government Grants

Matthew Green: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what average percentage of the total expenditure of *(a)* county, *(b)* district, *(c)* metropolitan and *(d)* London authorities was spent on the Local Government Pension Scheme in the last year for which figures are available. [162716]

Mr. Raynsford: For all local authorities in England, it is estimated that 2.2 per cent. of net current expenditure in 2001–02 was on employers' pension contributions to pension schemes other than the teachers, police and fire schemes. Most of this expenditure will be on the Local Government Pension Scheme.

23 local authorities, where authorised, also made payments to pension schemes from capital funds under section 40(6) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. This amounted to 1.3 per cent. of total capital expenditure and other transactions in 2001–02.

Information by class of authority is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Local Government Statutory Officers

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he last reviewed the disciplinary process for local government statutory officers; and if he will make a statement. [162879]

Mr. Raynsford: The arrangements under which a council handles any allegation of misconduct by its head of paid service, monitoring officer or chief finance officer were last amended in 2001. We have no plans to review them.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local government statutory officers have been *(a)* suspended and *(b)* dismissed in each year since the current disciplinary processes were enacted; and if he will make a statement. [162886]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister under what circumstances a local government statutory officer can be *(a)* suspended and *(b)* dismissed; and if he will make a statement. [162887]

Mr. Raynsford: The Local Authorities (Standing Orders)(England) Regulations 2001 set out the arrangements for councils to handle allegations of misconduct by their head of paid service, monitoring officer or chief finance officer. These arrangements provide that no disciplinary action (apart from suspension in order to allow investigation of the allegation) may be taken by a local authority in respect of such officers other than in accordance with a recommendation in a report made by an independent person appointed under the Regulations to investigate the allegation. If the authority does suspend the officer it must be on full pay and may only be for a maximum period of two months. The independent person may, once appointed, choose to extend the period of suspension if he feels it necessary to enable him to carry out his investigation.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* average and *(b)* longest elapsed times between initiation of the disciplinary process and (i) suspension and (ii) dismissal in cases involving local government statutory officers has been since the current regulations were enacted; and if he will make a statement. [162888]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Brady: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many days on average his Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary Question for Ordinary Written Answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a Question was. [155914]

Yvette Cooper: The effective handling of parliamentary questions is an issue to which my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister and ministerial colleagues attach great importance. In the Session 2002–03, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister answered 72.3 per cent. of its Ordinary Written Questions on time. The information requested is not held in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Regional Policy

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Government's financial guarantee for the regions post-2006 is dependent on the UK proposals for an EU framework for devolved regional policy being implemented. [163716]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government stated in its consultation document "A modern regional policy for the United Kingdom" March 2003 that the guarantee would apply

> "If the Government's proposed framework for EU policy were agreed[1]."

[1] Page iv, foreword.

South East England Development Agency

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Isle of Wight, of 10 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1524–26W, on the South East England Development Agency, if he will provide equivalent information for each preceding period of 12 months since 1998; and if he will list the new businesses created through such programmes. [163572]

Mr. Raynsford: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as the information is collated and will make a copy of the letter available in the Library of the House

Tetra

Norman Lamb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will investigate MM02 Airwave's activities in relation to the installation of Tetra masts for police communications. [161248]

Yvette Cooper: Parliament has entrusted local planning authorities with the responsibility for day-to-day planning control in their areas.

If there is concern that a local planning authority has not acted properly in a particular case it is possible to ask the Local Government Ombudsman to investigate whether there has been maladministration. However, it is advisable to put any complaints to the local authority's monitoring officer (through the Chief Executive's Office, if necessary) in the first place, so that the authority has the chance itself to resolve the complaint.

HEALTH

Soya Contamination

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the research carried out by Professor Denis Murphy of the Biotechnology Unit of Glamorgan University into the contamination of UK soya products by GM soya. [162175]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has noted the research carried out by Glamorgan University and the conclusions drawn by Professor Murphy. The FSA published a similar survey on the genetically modified content of foods in 2002. This survey showed a small number of products contained low levels of genetically modified material.

The FSA supports practical and enforceable labelling of genetically modified ingredients to ensure that consumers are not misled.

Care Homes

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reason inspection reports on care homes by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC), together with subsequent responses by care home owners, are not published in full on the NCSC website. [162920]

Dr. Ladyman: The National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) publishes the reports of its inspections in full on its website. Responses from providers are included wherever possible, although there have been difficulties in uploading this information onto the NCSC's computer system. The website makes it clear that provider comments are available from the NCSC office that originated the inspection or from the provider directly.

Weil's Disease

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* farmers, *(b)* members of farming families and *(c)* farm workers were reported as suffering from Weil's disease in each year since 1997. [161550]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Weil's disease is a serious infection with leptospiral bacteria. Not all leptospiral infections will result in the development of Weil's disease. Data collected include, but do not distinguish between farmers and their family members. The figures for all laboratory-confirmed reports of leptospiral infections in England and Wales since 1997 are set out as follows. Figures are not yet available for 2003.

	Total Leptospirosis human infections	*Infections in farmers (including family members)*	*Infections in farm workers*
1997	39	7	4
1998	29	8	4
1999	41	3	5
2000	54	14	5
2001	27	5	3
2002	[1]47	10	3

[1] Data are provisional

Source:
Health Protection Agency Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre 1997–2002

Ashford (Middlesex) Hospital

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the accident and emergency department at Ashford (Middlesex) Hospital was closed and replaced by an emergency department; and what the difference between the two facilities is. [160367]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The accident and emergency (A and E) department at Ashford Hospital has not been closed. It remains open 24-hours a day accepting a wide range of medical and surgical emergencies. However, in October 2000 one group of seriously injured patients, those with trauma injuries, were diverted to St. Peter's Hospital, to reflect the concentration of specialist trauma care at St. Peter's.

The diversion from Ashford Hospital to St. Peter's Hospital was made to improve further clinical outcomes for trauma patients and at the same time the trust renamed the A and E department in Ashford Hospital to 'emergency department'.

There is a standard departmental classification system for A and E departments. Ashford Hospital's A and E rating is unchanged. It remains a type 1 A and E, which is a major multi-specialty consultant led 24-hour service, with full resuscitation facilities and designated accommodation for the reception of accident and emergency patients.

Classification does not depend on the name of the service. This is, within certain rules, a matter for the local health service. The official description remains A and E but emergency department is increasingly used as a local alternative.

Cancer Research

Mr. Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list for *(a)* breast cancer, *(b)* cervical cancer and *(c)* cancer of the prostate, (i) the number of cases diagnosed, (ii) the number of recorded cases and (iii) the amount of Government money spent on research in financial year 2003–04. [162435]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The latest available figures of new cases of cancer diagnosed in England are for 2000. In that year a total of 34,045 new cases of breast cancer, 2,424 new cases of cervical, cancer and 23,109 new cases of prostate cancer were recorded.

Figures for government expenditure on research on specific types of cancer are not available. However analysis carried out in 2002 by the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI), which co-ordinates research activity among government bodies, charities and the pharmaceutical industry, indicates that of the combined spend that was available for analysis, around 40 per cent. was attributable to specific tumour sites. Approximately 18 per cent. was on breast cancer, approximately 4 per cent. on cervical cancer and approximately 8 per cent. on prostate cancer. This does not include national health service research and development support funding.

Prostate cancer is the only cancer that has a Department of Health funding target for research, of £4.2 million a year by the end of 2003–04, and we are on track to achieve this target.

Cardiac Care

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans he has to *(a)* extend the National Service Framework to cover cardiac arrhythmias and *(b)* set targets for their diagnosis and treatment; [162804]

(2) if he will make representations to the National Institute for Clinical Excellence that its appraisal of pacemakers *(a)* examines utilisation rates and *(b)* takes into account the views of the British Cardiac Society. [162807]

Miss Melanie Johnson: On 12 March the Government announced the establishment of an expert group to advise the Department of Health on future policy on sudden cardiac death and cardiac arrhythmia.

This could lead to the drafting of a new national service framework (NSF) chapter setting out the standards and models of care for these conditions. The group will be chaired by the National Clinical Director for Heart Disease, Dr Roger Boyle with voluntary and professional organisations including Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) and the British Cardiac Society being invited to join. Patients and families of patients will also have a strong voice in the work.

The British Cardiac Society are one of the many professional groups contributing to the ongoing National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) appraisal of their 2000 guidance on the use of implantable cardioverter defibrillators for arrhythmias. The 2000 report provided guidelines for utilisation rates, and any further recommendations will be made using the best evidence available. NICE are also conducting an appraisal on dual chamber pacing to assess the clinical and cost effectiveness of dual chamber pacemakers compared with single chamber pacemakers, and both appraisals will feed in to the work of the newly-formed group.

Child Obesity

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what involvement the NHS had in the health day organised by the Wirral and Deeside Standing Conference of Women's Organisations on ways to tackle children's obesity on 26 February; and if he will make a statement. [162512]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Chlamydia

Phil Sawford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have taken part in the chlamydia screening programme since it was launched. [161370]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The phased implementation of the national chlamydia screening programme began in April 2003. Our estimate is that over 23,000 tests have occurred during 2003. Establishing local programmes does take time and some areas have only recently started screening. We therefore expect numbers of tests carried out to rise considerably in 2004.

Community Health Councils

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health where the archives of the former Leeds Community Health Council have been lodged; and how they may be accessed by hon. Members. [162860]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 23 March 2004]*: The archives of the former Leeds Community Health Council are stored with the West Yorkshire Archive Service, Chapletown Road, Sheepscar, Leeds LS7 3AP. Access can be arranged by contacting the archive service.

Community Pharmacists

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out the *(a)* time scale, *(b)* funding and *(c)* content of his Department's plans to integrate community pharmacists into the national IT programme. [158960]

Mr. Hutton: The initial time scale, funding and objectives of the Department's plans for the national programme for information technology in the national health service (NPfIT) were set out in the strategy document, "21st century IT", published in June 2002.

The key objective of the NPfIT is to support, over time, the delivery of integrated health and social care by enabling appropriate access to records and improved storage, sharing and management of core data by all clinicians—including community pharmacists—involved in the delivery of care to the patient, subject to confidentiality and security safeguards and the informed consent of the patient.

We have redefined the scope of the electronic transmission of prescriptions (ETP) programme in order to support the wider pharmacy agenda. It will enable better use of pharmacists' skills and use them to provide patient centred healthcare services that are integral to the NHS.

The ETP programme will enable the commitments made in "Delivering 21st Century IT" to be taken forward and will provide support for the broader pharmacy agenda outlined in "Pharmacy in the Future" and "A Vision for Pharmacy in the New NHS".

Key elements of the electronic transmission of prescriptions system have been procured as part of the recently concluded NHS care records service procurements. Work is under way to plan how community pharmacies can be connected to the system and how their pharmacy computer systems can be upgraded to comply with the requisite technical specification. It is intended that deployment of the live system will commence from January 2005.

Complementary Medicines

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's policy is on the availability of complementary medicines through the NHS. [162042]

Miss Melanie Johnson: National health service access to complementary therapies is at the discretion of individual trusts and clinicians. A formal mechanism for commissioning primary medical services from a variety of providers will be available to primary care trusts from 1 April. This could be used to commission clinically-appropriate and cost-effective complementary therapies to help meet the needs of the local community.

Consultant Neurologists

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* minimum and *(b)* maximum waiting times were for initial access to consultant neurologists in each strategic health authority in England, in the last year for which figures are available. [162229]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* Information on the number of patients waiting for a first out-patient appointment to neurology specialties at quarter end has been placed in the Library. Information is not collected on the number still waiting less than 13 weeks. The information is aggregated at strategic health authority level but is based on national health service providers in England and includes some patients commissioned by Welsh local health boards.

Consultant Nurses

Laura Moffatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many consultant nurse specialists are working in elderly care in the NHS. [163338]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 24 March 2004]*: The information requested is not separately available; consultant nurse specialists in elderly care are included with consultant nurses in the acute, elderly and general area of work. As at September 2003, there were 235 consultant nurses in the acute, elderly and general area of work, an increase of 37 per cent. over the previous year.

Contraceptive Services

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether general practices will be able to opt out of providing contraceptive services; [162155]

(2) what forms of contraception may be prescribed in NHS walk-in centres; [162178]

(3) what forms of contraception are available over the counter; and what plans he has to extend this range; [162179]

(4) what powers pharmacists have to prescribe contraception; and what plans he has to change this. [162185]

Miss Melanie Johnson: General practices have always had the ability to decide whether or not to provide contraceptive services for their patients. Under the new general medical services (GMS) contract they will have to follow procedures to opt out of providing contraception as an additional service and, where they do so, for the first time primary care trusts will be responsible for securing alternative provision for patients affected.

National health service walk-in centres can provide emergency hormonal contraception as part of their core services and may also provide condoms. They exist to provide one-off episodes of care and quick access to advice and treatment for minor ailments and injuries. Therefore, it is not appropriate for them to prescribe regular methods of contraception which require follow up and repeat prescriptions.

Forms of contraception available over the counter are emergency hormonal contraception; male and female condoms, other female barrier methods (including the diaphragm or cap), spermicides and fertility devices. There are no plans currently to extend this range.

Some pharmacists are supplying emergency hormonal contraception under patient group directions which require pharmacists to satisfy certain criteria before supplying these medicines. Also, some pharmacists have undergone an approved training programme to qualify as supplementary prescribers. Under such arrangements the supplementary prescriber is able to prescribe medicines for an individual patient following diagnosis by a doctor as part of a clinical management plan agreed with the patient. Pharmacists could, under these arrangements, prescribe oral contraceptives.

Eye Tests (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many residents in Crosby aged over 60 years have benefited from the abolition of charges for eye tests; [160389]

(2) how many senior citizens in Crosby have access to free eye tests. [160534]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the following table.

General Ophthalmic Services: Number of sight tests paid for by Sefton Health Authority for the years ending 31 March 2000-03

Year ending	*Sight tests for aged 60 and over*[1]	*All sight tests*
31 March 1999	—	42,210
31 March 2000	21,830	57,070
31 March 2001	24,320	58,850
31 March 2002	24,220	58,400
31 March 2003	26,140	55,730

[1] From 1 April 1999, all patients aged 60 and over were included in the group eligible for NHS sight tests. From October 2002, primary care trusts took over the responsibility from health authorities. Sefton Health Authority became South Sefton PCT and Southport and Formby PCT. The data for the PCTs has been added to give 2003 data

Source:
SBE515, Department of Health.

General Practitioners

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact on *(a)* accident and emergency units, *(b)* the ambulance service and *(c)* NHS Direct of the new general practitioner contracts from 1 April. [162264]

Mr. Hutton: The new contract for general medical services will enable strategic health authorities and primary care trusts to commission more integrated unscheduled care services, bringing together providers of primary medical services, NHS Direct, ambulance trusts and other providers to enhance the delivery of high-quality, continuous and holistic care.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the total cost to the NHS of general practitioner services in the last recorded year. [158265]

Mr. Hutton: The table shows total general medical services (GMS) and personal medical services (PMS) expenditure for the financial year 2002–03.

GMS and PMS expenditure, England 2002–03

£000

	Strategic Health Authority expenditure	Primary Care Trust expenditure	Total expenditure
GMS discretionary	989	863,371	864,360
GMS non discretionary	1,116,722	951,003	2,067,725
PMS	3,607	1,148,179	1,151,786
Total	1,121,318	2,962,553	4,083,871

Sources:

1. Strategic Health Authority Audited Summarisation Forms.
2. Primary Care Trust Audited Summarisation Schedules.

Genetically Modified Foods

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the recent report published by the British Medical Association "Genetically modified foods and health: a second interim statement". [162174]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In assessing the safety of genetically modified foods the Food Standards Agency ensures that the most up to date scientific knowledge is taken into account. The agency regularly reviews its research programme to ensure that gaps in scientific knowledge are addressed and has noted the points raised in the recent report by the British Medical Association where additional areas of research have been identified.

Getting Ahead of the Game

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which of the action plans announced in his report Getting Ahead of the Game in January 2002 have been produced; when he intends to publish them; and if he will make a statement. [161139]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* The Department's infectious diseases strategy is entitled "Getting Ahead of the Curve" and identified four serious infectious disease problems requiring intensified or new control measures—health care associated infection, tuberculosis (TB), antimicrobial resistance and blood-borne and sexually transmitted viruses (HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and hepatitis C).

The action plans for healthcare associated infection and antimicrobial resistance have been encompassed within the Government's recent policy document "Winning Ways—Working to Reduce Healthcare Associated Infection in England", published in December 2003 and available at http://www.publications.doh.gov.uk/cmo/hai/winningways.pdf.

The TB action plan that will be published in the next few months.

"The National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV Implementation Action Plan" was published in June 2002 and is available at http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/01/95/90/04019590.pdf. A hepatitis C action plan to implement our consultation paper, "Hepatitis C Strategy for England", will be published in the next few months. We are keeping under review the need for a specific action plan on hepatitis B.

Health Development Agency

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 393W, on the Health Development Agency, what the level of income from sources other than government is; and what the sources are. [159157]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

Health development agency income from non central Government sources

£ thousand

Source/Purpose	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
Income from rent of premises to Electoral Commission	0	597	93
Policy and Communications	0	29	0
Transport and health	0	0	5
PCTs and Has	0	0	3
Income for overseas (European) work and other fees	610	512	399
Publications and merchandise and miscellaneous	87	54	87
Conference income	0	21	110
Total	697	1,213	697

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to improve the effectiveness of the Health Development Agency. [160075]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The effectiveness of the Health Development Agency is kept under regular review as part of the annual ministerial accountability review process.

Health Funding

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make additional funding available to areas of continued population growth. [157675]

Mr. Hutton: Changes in primary care trust population figures will be taken into account for the next round of allocations. Preparatory work will begin later in the year.

Health Services

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on *(a)* cancer care and *(b)* heart disease in Lancashire in each of the last five years; and how many people from Chorley benefited. [161592]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not collected centrally. Allocation of funding for particular treatments is a matter for the primary care trusts involved.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of accident and emergency at Chorley Hospital. [161609]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Lancashire Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Trust offers a 24 hour accident and emergency service at the Chorley and South Ribble District General Hospital. There are no plans to change this.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many medical beds there have been in Chorley Hospital in each year since 1997. [161588]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on beds is collected on a provider basis from national health service organisations and not on a constituency basis. Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust opened in 2002–03. It was formed from the merger of the following trusts, Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust (acute services) and Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

Relevant available Information on beds for the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust is shown in the following tables.

Average daily number of available beds, by sector, Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust, 1996–97 to 2002–03

	All specialties (excluding day only)	*General and Acute*	*Acute*	*Geriatric*	*Mental illness*	*Learning disability*	*Maternity*	*Day only*
1996–97	370	267	267	0	81	0	22	15
1997–98	408	308	282	26	78	0	22	13
1998–99	397	307	281	26	68	0	22	15
1999–2000	410	310	290	20	75	2	22	18
2000–01	420	320	304	16	74	3	22	20
2001–02	1,228	1,066	903	163	70	5	86	48
2002–03	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Source:
Department of Health form KH03

Average daily number of available beds, by sector, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, 1996–97 to 2002–03

	All specialties (excluding day only)	*General and Acute*	*Acute*	*Geriatric*	*Mental illness*	*Learning disability*	*Maternity*	*Day only*
1996–97	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1997–98	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1998–99	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1999–2000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2000–01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2001–02	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2002–03	1,156	1,073	929	144	0	0	84	45

Note:
The table contains the returns for both Chorley and South Ribble Trust and Preston Acute hospitals Trust to reflect the unified services and management structure across the Trusts.
Source:
Department of Health form KH03

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether there is a diagnostic and treatment centre located in Crosby. [160435]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There are no treatment centres in Crosby. However, a treatment centre is located at the Aintree Hospital National Health Service Trust and one is due to become operational at the Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust by the end of 2004.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much public funding has been spent on health in Crosby in each of the last seven years. [160439]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Public funding and expenditure figures are not collected on a constituency basis. Information is provided by health authority area from 1996–97 to 2001–02 and by strategic health authority area for 2002–03.

The expenditure is the total expenditure by the relevant health authorities for 1996–97 to 2002–03, and includes the commissioner costs of the relevant primary care trusts for 2000–01 to 2002–03.

The information requested is shown in the table.

Total expenditure by health authority area

£000

	Sefton Health Authority	*Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority*
1996–97	197,282	n/a
1997–98	179,155	n/a
1998–99	196,688	n/a
1999–2000	225,349	n/a
2000–01	310,887	n/a
2001–02	331,929	n/a
2002–03	n/a	2,755,985

Note:
2002–03 data remain provisional.
Sources:
1. Health authority audited accounts 1996–97 and 1997–98.
2. Health authority audited summarisation forms 1998–99 to 2001–02.
3. Strategic health authority audited summarisation forms 2002–03.
4. Primary care trust audited summarisation schedules 2000–01 to 2002–03.

Healthy Living Programmes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 7 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 393W, on healthy living programmes, when the Tavistock Institute evaluation will be *(a)* completed and *(b)* published. [159030]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The fieldwork for the Tavistock Institute evaluation is due to be completed in late 2004 with a published report in 2005. Interim findings are already available on the New Opportunities Fund website at www.nof.org.uk.

Household Goods (Chemicals)

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact on human health of man-made chemicals found in household goods, with particular reference to *(a)* perfluorinated compounds, *(b)* phthalates, *(c)* phenolic compounds and *(d)* brominated flame retardants; and what measures the Government plans to protect human health against the dangers posed by such chemicals. [159467]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Existing Substances Regulation (ESR) is European-wide legislation which required any manufacturer or importer of a chemical into the European Union to submit data to the European Commission. Substances were prioritised and have undergone comprehensive risk assessment, addressing both the human health and the environmental hazards and risks. Several chemicals from the phthalate, phenolic compounds, and brominated fire retardant groupings have been assessed, or are currently undergoing risk assessment. Those that have been agreed by Member States are publicly available on the website of the European Chemicals Bureau at http://ecb.jrc.it/existing-chemicals). In a number of cases, cross-European marketing and use restrictions have been introduced as a result of these assessments.

Following the voluntary withdrawal from the market by the major producer of perfluorooctane sulphonate (PFOS), a hazard assessment of this chemical was undertaken under the auspices of the Organisation for Economic Coperation and Development (OECD);this is available on the OECD website at www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/18/2382880.pdf. This is now being followed up by the United Kingdom with a risk reduction strategy which aims to look at the remaining uses of PFOS and how they can be phased out.

In addition, information on the hazardous properties and the safe use of chemicals in household goods is governed by the Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for supply) Regulations 2002. These Regulations require that manufacturers must assess a chemical product for its health effects. If dangerous, the product must be labelled with a warning symbol and phrases indicating the dangers. The particular chemical(s) which cause the product to be classified must be named on the label. The Regulations also require that all potentially dangerous chemicals supplied to the public must be in packaging that is properly labelled and contains warnings about the potential hazards and giving advice on suitable precautions.

Other regulations for protecting the consumer are the Department of Trade and Industry's General Product Safety Regulations 1994 (GPSR), which implement the EC General Products Safety Directive (92159/EEC) and apply to all consumer products (or aspects of those products) that are not covered by specific European safety legislation. The GPSR requires manufacturers to ensure that products present no risk or only minimal risk compatible with the product's use. In other words, producers must first take steps to reduce the hazard as far as possible, then warn about any residual hazard(s) and give advice about the precautions that consumers should take when using the product.

Human Embryos

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines are laid down for the inspection of laboratories experimenting on human embryos. [162588]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 permits research using human embryos for purposes only specified in the Act. Any establishment wishing to carry out such research must be awarded a licence to do so from the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), The HFEA's code of practice sets out the standards of conduct and practice expected of research establishments.

The HFEA inspects research establishments to ensure their compliance with the Act, the code of practice and the conditions of the research licence. Inspections are underpinned by the use of protocols specifically designed to guarantee consistency and thoroughness of a research inspection. These protocols are regularly reviewed by the HFEA to ensure they remain effective.

Lymphoedema

Mrs. Roe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines are in place to ensure that non-cancer related lymphoedema patients, who do not have access to a lymphoedema clinic, receive appropriate compression garments as one of the recognised four cornerstones of lymphoedema treatment. [163173]

Dr. Ladyman: We have issued no specific guidance to hospital trusts and primary care trusts for the provision of compression garments to non-cancer related lymphoedema patients. Decisions on what treatments to offer to patients with lymphoedema are a matter for the clinicians in charge of their care.

Malnutrition

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many elderly people were diagnosed as suffering from malnutrition in *(a)* Greater London, *(b)* each London borough and *(c)* England in each of the last five years; and what his Department's policy is for tackling malnutrition. [162387]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 25 March 2004]:* Malnutrition is caused by an imbalance of nutrients, particularly energy intake which impacts on body weight. Eating a balanced diet and keeping physically active help people to maintain a healthy body weight.

The table shows the count of finished admission episodes for national health service hospitals in London over the last five years where the primary diagnosis is malnutrition and the age of admission was 65 plus. Data is available only by health authority of residence.

Finished admission episodes by health authority

Health authority of residence	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Hillingdon	0	0	0	0	1
Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster	1	1	1	0	0
Enfield and Haringey	1	2	2	0	0
Redbridge and Waltham Forest	1	1	2	1	0
Bexley and Greenwich	1	0	0	0	0
Croydon	0	1	0	2	0
Kingston and Richmond	1	2	0	5	0
Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham	1	8	2	6	1
Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth	2	2	1	0	0
Barking and Havering	3	0	0	2	1
Barnet	0	0	2	0	0
Brent and Harrow	0		1	0	0
Camden and Islington	1	2	2	0	2
Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow	0	1	4	2	1
East London and The City	3	2	2	2	0

Note:
The table shows the count of finished admission episodes for NHS hospitals in England from 1998–99 to 2002–03 where the primary diagnosis is malnutrition and the age of admission was 65 plus.
Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health

	Finished admission episodes
1998–99	114
1999–2000	98
2000–01	109
2001–02	128
2002–03	112

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health

In the "NHS Plan" (2000), the Government made a commitment to reduce under nutrition by developing a hospital nutrition policy to improve the outcome of care of patients by 2004. A number of measures and strategies are in place to manage, monitor and screen patients for under nutrition in hospitals, residential care and the wider community. Nutritional screening is recommended for the care of specific groups, such as those outlined in the "National Service Framework for Older People" (2001).

Medicines and Health Care Products Regulatory Agency

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the information from the Yellow Card system is used by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency. [162489]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) are responsible for monitoring the safety of medicines in the United Kingdom. Reports of suspected adverse drug reactions (ADRs) submitted by health professionals through the Yellow Card scheme are an important source of information regarding the safety of medicines in normal clinical practice.

The Yellow Card scheme primarily acts as an early warning system for the identification of previously unrecognised adverse reactions and also provides valuable information on recognised adverse drug reactions, allowing the MHRA/CSM to identify and refine the understanding of risk factors that may affect the clinical management of patients. The value of the scheme has been demonstrated many times and it has helped to identify numerous important safety issues. To date the MHRA/CSM has received more than 450,000 ADRs reports from the Yellow Card scheme.

In evaluating a possible drug safety issue, the Yellow Card data is typically considered in conjunction with relevant information from other sources such as clinical trial data, published studies, adverse drug reaction reports received from the pharmaceutical industry and data from other Regulatory Authorities.

Where necessary, to protect public health, the MHRA on the advice of CSM may take regulatory action to ensure the medicine is used in a way which minimises risk and maximises benefits to the patient. Possible actions include addition of a new side effect to the product information provided to prescribers and patients, and issuing warnings about groups of patients who should not be given the medicine. In rare circumstances, the MHRA may withdraw a medicine from the market, if the risks of a medicine in clinical use are greater than its potential benefits.

Information on adverse drug reactions is communicated to health professionals and patients by the MHRA/CSM through various routes including patient information leaflets and regular safety bulletins.

Meningitis

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what financial support his Department gives to the voluntary sector in providing continuing support for people affected by meningitis; [160779]

(2) what plans he has to grant section 65 moneys to the voluntary sector concerned with people affected by meningitis. [160780]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Meningitis Trust received a Section 64 grant from the Department to fund the Home Visiting Service project. This project supports individuals and their families who have been affected by meningitis.

The total value of the grant awarded over three years is £83,100.

The Department is continuing to fund the Home Visiting Service project at the Meningitis Trust in 2004–05.

Mercury Healthcare

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 861W, on Mercury Healthcare, if he will make a statement on the reasons why the Government decided to switch preferred bidder status from Mercury Healthcare to Capio UK in relation to the provision of a diagnostic treatment centre at Ashford Hospital, Middlesex. [162011]

Mr. Hutton: It was decided to switch preferred bidder status after careful consideration of the detailed contract requirements for the spine chain. This is a complex contract that incorporates different clinical specialties, casemix and locations and it is important that the provider matches the needs of the national health service in each area.

Microsoft

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the NHS will spend in 2003–04 on the licensing of Microsoft products. [156894]

Mr. Hutton: The estimated spend for 2003–04 by the national health service on the licensing of Microsoft products is £53 million.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken to ensure that future ordering of proprietary software by the NHS ensures that the NHS will be able to purchase software from a wide range of suppliers at economic cost. [156895]

Mr. Hutton: The NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency and the Office of Government Commerce have put in place a framework contract for information technology products known as GCat. The contract offers a comprehensive range of software to the national health service, at competitive prices, from a number of proprietary software and specialist software resellers.

National Programme for IT

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the possibility of the loss of patient data while new IT schemes under the National Programme for IT are being implemented. [159141]

Mr. Hutton: The national programme for information technology (NpfIT) is implementing a series of IT solutions to improve patient choice and the quality of patient treatment and care. Fundamental to this is the national health service care records service, that will enable patient care information to be accessed at the point of need anywhere in England.

In most cases, electronic patient records will be transferred from existing local IT systems and patient administration systems into the nationally available NHS care records service. This is not a new process and occurs at local level every time there is a system refresh or upgrade. Standard IT protocols allow for data to be regressed if problems are encotmtered during transfer to ensure that data is not lost and contracts with suppliers require data back ups to be taken regularly.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether there is a facility in the National Programme for IT accredited systems for general practitioners to write free text notes on the patient in the electronic patient record. [160662]

Mr. Hutton: The facility to record free text is a mandatory requirement for accredited systems for general practice. It is also part of the functionality of the national health service national care records service and this facility will therefore be provided for in the future.

NHS (Charges for Overseas Visitors) Regulations

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the provisions of the NHS (Charges for Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1989 will come into force. [163612]

Mr. Hutton: The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1989 came into force on 1 April 1989.

NHS Funding (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much public funding has been spent on *(a)* heart disease and *(b)* cancer care in Crosby in each of the last five years. [160388]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not collected centrally. Allocations of funding for particular treatments are matters for the local primary care trust.

NHS Recruitment

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in which overseas countries the NHS has advertised for staff to work in the UK in the last five years. [163103]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* The Department does not collect this information centrally. The national health service are responsible for their own advertising. The Department has however advertised on behalf of the NHS in the following countries:

Asia
Australia
Austria
Belgium
Canada
Denmark
Germany
Greece
Finland
France
Hong Kong
India
Ireland
Italy
Luxembourg
Malta
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Singapore
South America
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United States of America
West Indies

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget is for recruitment advertising in foreign newspapers for NHS staff; and how many NHS trusts are paying for recruitment advertisements in such newspapers. [163104]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* National health services trusts are responsible for their own recruitment both nationally and internationally and no data on the number of costs of their advertisements in the foreign media are held centrally.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Dorrell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which NHS Trusts reported financial deficits for financial year 2002–03. [162059]

Mr. Hutton: The national health service trusts that reported deficits in 2002–03 annual accounts are listed in the table.

Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust
Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust
Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust
Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust
Buckinghamshire Mental Health NHS Trust
Burnley Health Care NHS Trust
Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust
Ealing Hospital NHS Trust
East Kent Community NHS Trust
East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust
East Sussex County NHS Trust
East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust
Epsom and St. Helier NHS Trust
Essex Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Frimley Park Hospital NHS Trust
Good Hope Hospital NHS Trust
Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Trust
Kettering General Hospital NHS Trust
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
Medway NHS Trust
Milton Keynes General Hospital NHS Trust
New Possibilities NHS Trust
Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Mental Health NHS Trust
North Bristol NHS Trust
North Cumbria Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
North West Surrey Mental Health NHS Partnership NHS Trust
Northern Birmingham Mental Health NHS Trust
Oxford Radcliffe Hospital NHS Trust
Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust
Queen Mary's Sidcup NHS Trust
Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District Hospital NHS Trust
Royal Berkshire and Battle Hospitals NHS Trust
Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust
Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust
Royal Shrewsbury Hospitals NHS Trust
Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Trust
Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust
South Manchester University Hospitals NHS Trust
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust
The Princess Royal Hospital NHS Trust
The Royal West Sussex NHS Trust
United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust
West Middlesex University NHS Trust
West Sussex Health and Social Care NHS Trust
Weston Area Health NHS Trust
Whittington Hospital NHS Trust
Wolverhampton Health Care NHS Trust
Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

Source:
2002–03 Audited NHS Trust Summarisation Schedules.

Non-consultant Career Grade Doctors (Dermatology)

Mr. Bruce George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what action his Department is taking to encourage the NHS to make wider use of non-consultant career grade doctors in dermatology; [161673]

(2) what action his Department is taking to reduce the number of non-consultant career grade redundancies in dermatology arising from the withdrawal of primary care trust funding. [161675]

Mr. Hutton: The Government are keen to maximise opportunities for doctors in the non-consultant career grades to utilise their skills to the full to the benefit of all. The Department's recent consultation document, "Choice and Opportunity", recommended a system of accreditation through which non-consultant career

grade doctors with formally recognised skills can work independently at the appropriate level. The introduction of a competency-based framework should facilitate the movement of doctors between specialties to support a more flexible medical work force.

Since 1997, the number of staff grade and associate specialist doctors in dermatology nationally has increased by 130 per cent.

Nursing Vacancies (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* hospital and *(b)* community nursing vacancies there are within each (i) primary care trust and (ii) strategic health authority in Greater London. [158436]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 3 March 2004]*: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Paddington Basin Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on consultancy fees in relation to the Paddington Basin private finance initiative project for St. Mary's Paddington, the Royal Brompton and Harefield hospitals. [159303]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* A total of £5.638 million has been spent to 31 December 2003 on advisers' fees for planning the Paddington Health Campus.

All consultants are appointed via the formal national health service tendering process.

Pathologists

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vacancies there are for pathologists in each primary care trust area; and what plans he has for filling the vacant positions. [161968]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested has been provided by employing organisations, and has been placed in the Library.

The significant expansion in numbers of doctors in training within the pathology group (39 per cent. between September 1997 and September 2003) reflects a recognition that the pathology work force needs further expansion.

In 2003–04, histopathology was allocated 75 centrally funded Specialist Registrar training places, which was over 18 per cent. of the total number of centrally funded posts available. In 2004–05, there will be a further allocation of 37 centrally funded training places to histopathology and 20 further posts to the pathology group as a whole.

The Department continually monitors requirements for the whole work force, including pathology. Action is being taken to extend working lives by offering flexible retirement schemes and flexible employment opportunities.

Work is being taken forward to develop the roles of all staff within the pathology group in order to make the best use of professional skills and knowledge.

Pharmaceutical Packaging

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what rules apply to the use by a pharmaceutical manufacturer of tamper-proof packaging on a medical product; and if he will make a statement. [161970]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The regulations covering the packaging of medicinal products makes no reference to the use of tamper-evident presentations. Any decision to use such packaging is a commercial decision for the marketing authorisation holder, provided the safety, quality and efficacy of the medicine is assured.

Prisons (Mental Health)

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on prison mental health services. [156019]

Dr. Ladyman: By the end of March 2004 national health service mental health in-reach teams will be operating in 90 English prisons where the need is greatest for these services. These teams will include 300 additional staff to provide specialist community-type services to over 5,000 prisoners with serious mental health problems in accordance with the NHS Plan. Investment in NHS mental heath services in prisons will double to £20 million a year by 2005–06.

Public Health

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* timetable and *(b)* budget for his Department's consultation on the Public Health White Paper is. [158536]

Miss Melanie Johnson: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health launched a consultation document entitled "Choosing Health?" on 3 March 2004. Consultation will close on 28 May. We will publish a White Paper in the summer.

The consultation process will be managed within existing budgets.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 331W, on public health, when his Department's discussions with strategic health authorities will be concluded. [159129]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Discussions with strategic health authority directors of public health about local public health reports are on-going.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1697W, on Public Health Skills Audit, how the voluntary register is maintained; and what it contains. [159158]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The United Kingdom public health voluntary register is an independent register of public health professionals who can demonstrate that they meet the nationally agreed competencies to practise at specialist level in public health.

The register was established in May 2003 and is supported by all four departments of health in the UK and was commissioned by a multi-agency group

consisting of the Royal Institute of Public Health (RIPH), the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) and the Multidisciplinary Public Health Forum (MDPHF).

Further information is available on the register web site at www.publichealthregister.org.uk.

Rapid Access Chest Pain Clinics (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many rapid access chest pain clinics there are in Crosby. [160434]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There are no rapid access chest pain clinics in Crosby. Rapid access chest pain clinics are located at Aintree Hospital National Health Service Trust and Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust.

Science Strategy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps he has taken to enhance science in his Department, since the publication of the Government's science strategy, Investing in Innovation; [162252]

(2) how his Department's chief scientific adviser has ensured that the Department's scientific activities are well directed, as recommended in paragraph 7.11 of the Government's science strategy, Investing in Innovation, published in July 2002. [162483]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Since July 2002 the Department has continued to work with its partners to sustain and develop the science base, and to develop policies and practice based wherever possible on sound science and research. We are building substantial portfolios of research in priority areas including cancer, coronary heart disease, mental health, services for older people and health inequalities. In June 2003, the Genetics White Paper announced new investment in research initiatives to translate genetic discoveries into improved care.

The recent Budget report announced that the Government will work with the national health service, industry and the medical charities to strengthen clinical research in the United Kingdom. To support this work, the Department will increase the national health service funding for research and development by £100 million by 2008.

The functions of Department of Health chief scientific adviser are carried out jointly by the chief medical officer and director of research and development in their respective capacities. The Chief Medical Officer is a member of the departmental management board and is also advised on scientific matters by the Chief Scientist. Details of how the Department's scientific activities are directed are outlined in its science and innovation strategy, which is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

Sexual Health

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will estimate the extra costs associated with implementing in full the national screening programme for chlamydia immediately; [159729]

(2) what reasons underlie the decision not to implement throughout England a chlamydia screening programme until 2008; [159732]

(3) what estimate he has made of the number of chlamydia infections that will go unidentified before the national screening programme is fully implemented in 2008; [159733]

(4) if he will estimate the cost to the NHS of *(a)* infertility treatment and *(b)* other treatment relating to chlamydia infections over the next 50 years. [159772]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Reliable cost estimates of introducing the full chlamydia screening programme immediately are not available. The Government are committed to completing the screening programme for chlamydia at the earliest possible date.

We believe that the phased introduction of screening, in line with advice from the national screening committee, is the most effective way forward. Local areas need support in establishing the programme which involves organising screening across a network of services and ensuring that samples are sent to laboratories, positive results are sent to individuals and that treatment, partner notification and contact tracing are undertaken. In addition laboratory staff are being trained to use the more reliable molecular amplification test, which we are supporting across all the regions.

In just two years, the programme has been rolled-out to over a quarter of primary care trusts (PCTs) in England. The third phase of the programme will be launched this year, which will bring total coverage to one third of PCTs.

Estimates on future numbers of infections are not available. Estimates are also not available on the cost to the national health service of infertility and other treatment relating to chlamydia infection over the next 50 years.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 1 March, *Official Report*, column 708W on sexual health, if he will provide total figures for England for each year. [159974]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The total number of teenagers (patients who were less than 20 years of age) treated for sexually transmitted diseases in genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics in England from 1995 to 2002 are shown in the table.

Number of attenders at genitourinary medicine clinics in England aged less than 20 years with one or more of the following diagnoses: infectious syphilis, uncomplicated gonorrhoea, uncomplicated chlamydial infection, genital herpes (first attack) and genital warts (first attack)

Sex description	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Female	14787	16949	19479	20979	23018	25225	27346	29795
Male	3986	4613	5664	6530	7768	9116	9694	11026
Total	18773	21562	25143	27509	30786	34341	37040	40821

Note:
The England totals shown here correspond to the total number of cases shown in the regional table given in the answer of 1 March, *Official Report*, column 708W. The strategic health authority data totals given in that answer differ from the regional data totals because these, and most of CDSC's other sexually transmitted disease data presentations, are calculated using an imputation method. Data below regional level are not imputed.
Data source:
Health Protection Agency, KC60 statutory returns from GUM clinics.

Sport

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance his Department is giving to primary care trusts on how to raise levels of sport and physical activity to the Government target. [159954]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The national service framework for coronary heart disease and the NHS Plan require local action to tackle obesity and physical activity, informed by advice from the Health Development Agency (HDA) on what works. The Department commissioned the HDA to conduct a review of the evidence on the effectiveness of public health interventions for increasing physical activity amongst adults. This will be published shortly. The guidance will be available to national health service regions, strategic health authorities and primary care trusts as well as local government.

The launch of the consultation on public health, "Choosing Health?", provides the opportunity to discuss at a national, regional and local level what needs to be done to develop a coherent strategy to improve health. The activity co-ordination team will publish its draft proposals setting out current and future action to increase activity levels. The Government will then publish a White Paper setting out its strategy for action in the summer.

St. Helens Hospitals

Mr. Woodward: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was spent on *(a)* healthcare as a whole, *(b)* general practitioner surgeries and *(c)* hospitals in (i) St Helens, (ii) Merseyside and (iii) the North West Region; and what the expected spending is in the next three years. [141484]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is shown in the following tables.

Expenditure on primary, secondary and total healthcare

£000

For 2002–03	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Total*
Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority area	457,271	1,360,679	1,817,950
Greater Manchester Strategic Health Authority area	614,022	1,742,178	2,356,200
Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority area	578,008	1,894,710	2,472,718
Total	1,649,301	4,997,567	6,646,868
St.Helens Primary Care Trust	43,149	126,697	169,846

Note:
Audited summarisation schedules of primary care trusts within the three strategic health authority areas 2002–03 data remains provisional.
Sources:
Audited summarisation forms of the Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority, the Greater Manchester Strategic Health Authority, and the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority 2002–03.

North West Regional Primary Care Trust Allocations

£000

Primary Care Trust	*A 2003–04*	*B 2004–05*	*C 2005–06*
Bebington and West Wirral	99,993	108,879	118,128
Birkenhead and Wallasey	224,569	246,463	269,198
Central Cheshire	203,159	222,612	242,996
Central Liverpool	286,884	321,165	358,315
Cheshire West	138,205	150,791	164,098
Eastern Cheshire	161,386	175,727	190,654
Ellesmere Port and Neston	77,814	84,726	91,920
Halton	122,778	134,429	146,687
Knowsley	163,276	183,010	204,420
North Liverpool	118,120	132,316	147,710
South Liverpool	100,413	110,029	120,103
South Sefton	161,978	177,546	193,820
Southport and Formby	115,701	125,978	136,676
St Helens	181,808	199,906	222,113
Warrington	163,513	178,963	195,266
Blackburn With Darwen	143,881	158,299	175,336
Blackpool	151,874	166,655	182,076
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	241,264	264,963	289,574
Carlisle and District	102,316	111,989	122,216
Chorley and South Ribble	171,696	188,153	205,458
Eden Valley	58,439	63,669	69,113

North West Regional Primary Care Trust Allocations

£000

Primary Care Trust	*A 2003–04*	*B 2004–05*	*C 2005–06*
Fylde	63,955	69,679	75,636
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	103,859	114,072	124,674
Morecambe Bay	289,864	316,293	344,226
Preston	141,957	154,662	167,886
West Cumbria	1 22,798	133,788,	145,227
West Lancashire	97,085	106,387	116,168
Wyre	112,822	123,458	134,710
Ashton, Leigh and Wigan	291,575	319,620	348,930
Bolton	250,490	274,908	300,262
Bury	161,739	177,168	193,365
Central Manchester	183,485	200,235	217,943
Heywood and Middleton	73,694	80,879	88,338
North Manchester	181,822	198,849	216,862
Oldham	211,831	232,879	257,782
Rochdale	128,790	141,263	154,258
Salford	247,939	271,411	296,139
South Manchester	138,532	151,887	165,832
Stockport	251,919	274,293	297,789
Tameside and Glossop	219,032	240,013	261,987
Trafford North	88,212	96,076	104,389
Trafford South	108,726	118,389	128,446

Notes:
1. The allocations cover PCTs in the Strategic Health Authority areas of Cheshire and Merseyside, Cumbria and Lancashire and Greater Manchester.
2. These are revenue allocation amounts and not expenditure figures.
3. It is for PCTs in partnership with Strategic Health Authorities and other local stakeholders to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising Services.

Telecommunications Masts

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the level of risk to public health to those living close to mobile telephone masts changes according to the type of mast. [163430]

Miss Melanie Johnson: A review of recent research entitled Health Effects from Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields, published by the National Radiological Protection Board's (NRPB) advisory group on non-ionising radiation concluded:

> "Exposure levels from living near to mobile phone base stations are extremely low, and the overall evidence indicates that they are unlikely to pose a risk to health."

The Government along with other European Union Members States has adopted the exposure guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) as expressed in the 1999 European Council Recommendation 519/EC/ 1999. The operators of mobile telephone equipment including GSM, 3G and TETRA systems should ensure that public exposure does not exceed the ICNIRP guidelines.

A substantial number of measurements of potential exposures of the public from base station emissions, have been made by a number of bodies, including the NRPB (www.nrpb.org) and the Radiocommunications Agency (now part of Ofcom) (www.ofcom.org.uk). In all cases exposures have been very much lower than the guidelines.

I wrote to right hon. and hon. Members 21 January 2004 with a summary of the current position relating to mobile phone technology and health concerns.

Tuberculosis

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of TB were reported in each month since 1997. [161141]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* The numbers of tuberculosis cases reported each week since 1997 are shown in the table.

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Year total	5,664	5,915	5,938	6,379	6,571	6,627
Week number						
1	87	59	104	110	113	71
2	102	110	111	135	116	177
3	110	95	101	114	120	110
4	111	108	109	98	126	110
5	127	125	106	127	141	97
6	111	123	126	147	130	151
7	123	99	90	123	111	108
8	100	104	106	108	112	152
9	118	101	123	133	127	123
10	107	135	124	105	101	109
11	115	110	107	121	110	112
12	126	93	105	141	124	138
13	96	124	106	133	95	89
14	88	107	103	126	147	92
15	102	131	123	132	112	153
16	123	79	131	155	116	163
17	157	110	134	96	149	125
18	94	102	94	133	154	170
19	90	93	144	134	101	99
20	133	133	174	146	146	154
21	118	109	113	125	211	114
22	102	105	99	105	111	225
23	116	153	112	135	170	74
24	105	114	124	109	159	150
25	130	122	142	159	171	147
26	102	124	148	120	128	177
27	120	149	131	143	156	136
28	91	112	142	120	145	124
29	106	136	134	142	125	143
30	115	140	99	129	169	144
31	104	129	144	121	116	130
32	126	107	141	116	142	156
33	124	109	135	127	113	121
34	113	111	115	167	115	134
35	84	129	90	97	85	96
36	111	53	119	111	131	127
37	122	82	107	108	127	109
38	119	138	122	137	134	120
39	115	123	110	139	114	116
40	94	119	104	131	130	152
41	101	113	112	124	142	106
42	94	129	98	124	101	102
43	142	116	85	120	117	132
44	114	124	123	124	116	115
45	102	95	101	99	114	141
46	86	109	100	121	97	127
47	102	130	117	106	145	123
48	1O6	103	114	101	152	114
49	111	115	113	124	92	164
50	102	137	80	83	108	120
51	90	90	99	132	127	95
52	77	104	44	63	57	90
53	—	45	—	—	—	—

Source:
Health Protection Agency, Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the incidence of multi-drug resistant TB was in each year since 1990. [161045]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* Routine surveillance of anti-tuberculosis drug resistance commenced in 1994. The incidence of multi-drug resistance since then is shown in the table.

	Percentage
1993	0.8
1994	1.5
1995	1.9
1996	1.7
1997	1.3
1998	1.4
1999	0.8
2000	1.0
2001	1.2
2002	[1]1.1

[1] Provisional figure.

Source:
Health Protection Agency, Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre.

Websites

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total annual cost of his Department's websites, including those of its agencies, was in the most recent year for which figures are available. [159519]

Mr. Hutton: Department of Health (www.doh.gov.uk and www.dh.gov.uk)The cost of the Department's website is shown in the table.

The figures include hosting and maintenance, development and dedicated staff costs (using agreed Civil Service staff costs including salaries, common services etc.)

Financial Year	*Total cost £000*
2002–03	1,844.0
2003–04	2,799.8

The Department launched a new website on 16 February 2004. It is available at www.dh.gov.uk. The old website was migrated onto 'DotP', the central government content management platform. DotP has been developed in partnership with, and is hosted by, the Office of the e-Envoy. The full cost of this major project is included incosts above, the majority of which will not be incurred in subsequent years.

NHS Pension Agency (www.nhspa.gov.uk)

All website development and maintenance work is covered under a single outsourcing contract with Envision and includes all information technology provision. No separate costs are kept on website specific work.

The NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (www.pasa.nhs.uk)

The NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency hosts and supports in-house two websites, www.pasa.nhs.uk, www.pasa.nhs.uk and an intranet site. The cost shown in the table covers all three sites. Separate figures are not available. These figures include hosting, maintenance, development and dedicated staff costs. Staffing costs are based on gross salary, but exclude employer's on-costs (National Insurance and superannuation).

Financial Year	*Total cost £000*
2003–04	172.5

The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency—Medicines (www.medicines.mhra.gov.uk)

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) medicines arm is unable to isolate the cost of its website from its overall information technology costs.

The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency—Devices (www.devices.mhra.gov.uk)

The costs shown for the MHRA Devices website is for last complete financial year. Costs for the currant year are expected to be very similar. They include hosting and maintenance, development and staffing costs based on agreed Civil Service staff costs (including salaries, common services etc.).

Financial Year	*Total cost £000*
2002–03	85.5

NHS Estates (www.nhsestates.gov.uk)

The costs shown for the NHS Estates website are for last complete financial year. Accurate data for this financial year is not yet available.

Financial Year	*Total cost £000*
2002–03	267.1

The Department is responsible funding a number of other websites, such as NHS Direct Online and NHS Careers Website. For information on the cost of hosting, development and maintaining these sites, I refer the hon. Member to the response given to the hon. Member for Truro and St Austell (Mr Taylor) on Friday 12 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1828W.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 26 March 2004

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Magistrates Courts

Simon Hughes: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs which magistrates courts have been closed in Greater London since 1997. [163764]

Mr. Leslie: Closures of magistrates' courts are a matter for local Magistrates Courts Committees (MCC). Three magistrates' courts have closed in Greater London since 1997. These were Marlborough Street on 31 March 1997, Clerkenwell on 31 December 1998 and Hampstead 31 March 1997.

Ministers may only intervene in the event of an appeal by the Paying Authority. Ministers have allowed appeals against closure of four magistrates' court houses in London, during the period. These are at Kingston Upon Thames on 8 April 2003, Sutton on 8 March 2004, Harrow on 8 March 2004 and Barking and Dagenham on 8 March 2003.

TRANSPORT

Chief Scientific Adviser

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the previous work experience and knowledge of the Department's Chief Scientific Adviser that is relevant to the position. [164040]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport's Chief Scientific Adviser is Professor Frank Kelly, who divides his time between this role and his position as Professor of the Mathematics of Systems at the University of Cambridge. He obtained his doctorate in 1976 from the University of Cambridge, and since then has held positions in the University's Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Mathematics.

Professor Kelly's research interests are in random processes, networks and optimization, and especially in applications to the design and control of networks and the understanding of congestion phenomena. He and colleagues at Cambridge developed, jointly with British Telecom, the routing scheme implemented in BT's main digital telephone network. His current research is directed at understanding methods of self-regulation in large-scale complex networks, which include both transport networks and the communication infrastructures upon which our experiences of transport increasingly depend.

Frank Kelly has received several prizes for his work. In 1989 he was awarded the Guy Medal in Silver of the Royal Statistical Society, and in the same year he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. In 1992 he was awarded the Lanchester Prize of the Operations Research Society of America, he gave the 1995 Clifford Paterson Lecture of the Royal Society, the 1996 Blackett Lecture of the Operational Research Society, and was awarded the 1997 Naylor Prize of the London Mathematical Society. He received an Honorary Doctorate of Science from Heriot-Watt University in 2001.

Professor Kelly served as Director of the Statistical Laboratory in the University of Cambridge from 1991 to 1993. He has served on the Scientific Board of Hewlett-Packard's Basic Research Institute in Mathematical Sciences, the Scientific Council of EURANDOM, the Conseil Scientifique of France Telecom, the Council of the Royal Society and the Council of the Royal Statistical Society. He has chaired the Royal Institution/University of Cambridge Mathematics Enrichment Project, and the management committee of the Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the process by which the Department's Chief Scientific Adviser was employed; and if he will publish the application details of the other short-listed candidates. [164041]

Mr. McNulty: This was an open competition to recruit a Chief Scientific Adviser at Senior Civil Servant Pay Band 2 level for the Department.

The process was managed and chaired by Alastair Macdonald, the Civil Service Commissioner. The other panel members were Lord Oxburgh, Sir David King, the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser and the previous DfT Permanent Secretary Rachael Lomax and the current Permanent DfT Secretary David Rowlands.

The successful candidate was Professor Frank Kelly who took up post on 1 August 2003. It is not the Department's practice to declare the names of the other short listed candidates, as all applications are made in confidence.

Departmental Officials

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which former officials of the Department have asked for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst and Young and *(d)* KPMG. [156904]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport formed on 29 May 2002. All information provided dates from 29 May 2002.

All civil servants are subject to the Business Appointment Rules, which set out the circumstances in which they must seek permission to accept outside appointments within two years of leaving the Civil Service. A copy of the Rules is available in the Libraries of the House. Information about appointments taken up by the most senior staff is published in the annual reports of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments. The next annual report will be published shortly.

According to Department for Transport records and records kept by the Cabinet Office, no former officials of the Department have asked for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst and Young or *(d)* KPMG.

Home Zone Area-Based Initiative

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding has been allocated in *(a)* 2000–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* total to the Home Zone area-based initiative. [163661]

Mr. McNulty: Local authorities are generally expected to fund Home Zones from mainstream funding, particularly the Single Capital Pot, and allocations are not identified or recorded centrally. Through the one-off Home Zone Challenge programme, a total of £30 million funding was allocated to individual schemes in England for the period 2001–05, and was not based on yearly allocations.

Road Accidents

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many pedestrians were *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured in road traffic accidents in each year since 1997 in Greater London, broken down by borough. [163765]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Pedestrian casualties by severity for Greater London: 1997–2002

		1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Barking	Killed	3	2	3	2	2	1
	Injured	156	167	138	130	125	121
Barnet	Killed	6	5	6	6	4	5
	Injured	260	298	319	274	274	257
Bexley	Killed	3	2	1	2	3	1
	Injured	122	132	152	144	149	131
Brent	Killed	3	5	8	9	2	2
	Injured	323	310	318	323	264	281
Bromley	Killed	2	5	7	6	3	3
	Injured	248	195	198	155	188	200
Camden	Killed	6	3	7	5	4	5
	Injured	458	412	439	423	395	360
City of London	Killed	0	2	0	2	0	0
	Injured	160	165	159	153	126	115
Croydon	Killed	4	3	1	7	4	9
	Injured	334	327	363	308	306	263
Ealing	Killed	10	5	12	5	5	9
	Injured	347	321	376	335	303	303
Enfield	Killed	9	4	5	2	3	2
	Injured	287	267	265	249	221	237
Greenwich	Killed	3	7	1	3	3	6
	Injured	250	238	233	228	208	207
Hackney	Killed	4	4	1	6	4	2
	Injured	338	312	319	299	304	250
Hammersmith	Killed	6	3	3	3	2	2
	Injured	258	209	258	204	214	199
Haringey	Killed	5	1	1	6	10	8
	Injured	309	292	294	355	297	296
Harrow	Killed	2	1	5	2	5	1
	Injured	170	150	141	135	141	100
Havering	Killed	5	2	3	2	5	1
	Injured	138	168	137	121	161	124
Hillingdon	Killed	9	0	5	4	0	4
	Injured	223	201	169	166	186	181
Hounslow	Killed	5	5	5	6	4	5
	Injured	232	199	173	185	182	160
Islington	Killed	6	7	4	6	2	4
	Injured	330	363	321	328	309	305
Kensington and Chelsea	Killed	4	4	4	3	5	4
	Injured	327	327	304	271	250	201
Kingston-upon-Thames	Killed	7	4	3	0	2	1
	Injured	129	91	82	96	98	97
Lambeth	Killed	9	9	3	5	9	5
	Injured	436	490	452	437	392	359
Lewisham	Killed	2	7	4	3	5	3
	Injured	353	309	345	320	261	272
Merton	Killed	1	2	3	3	2	0
	Injured	154	163	158	143	143	108
Newham	Killed	1	2	6	2	5	1
	Injured	316	321	307	310	270	257
Redbridge	Killed	6	3	6	5	4	2
	Injured	176	189	195	171	177	166
Richmond-upon-Thames	Killed	1	1	2	2	1	1
	Injured	127	108	116	119	116	116

Pedestrian casualties by severity for Greater London: 1997–2002

		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Southwark	Killed	5	3	4	3	6	3
	Injured	370	371	375	375	352	303
Sutton	Killed	2	2	3	1	2	4
	Injured	118	119	119	110	98	80
Tower Hamlets	Killed	6	2	5	7	3	5
	Injured	238	288	250	255	258	212
Waltham Forest	Killed	6	3	2	6	4	4
	Injured	228	278	234	211	210	194
Wandsworth	Killed	5	2	3	5	2	0
	Injured	270	275	291	276	290	267
Westminster	Killed	13	8	8	12	13	10
	Injured	849	868	870	869	752	640

Secondments

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG have made to his Department since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from his Department have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [156923]

Mr. McNulty: Secondments are part of the Interchange Initiative, which promotes the exchange of people and good practice between the Civil Service and other organisations. Before an Interchange can occur all parties must be satisfied that no conflict of interest arises.

The Department for Transport was formed on 29 May 2002. All information dates from 29 May 2002.

According to Department records, there have been no secondments of staff from Department for Transport to these firms.

According to Department records, there has been one secondment into the Department for Transport from these firms:

1 Grade: SCS

Band: SCSPB

Organisation: Ernst & Young

Host: Transport Finance Directorate

Post held: Assistant to Corporate Finance Advisor

Start: 19 January 2004

End: January 2005

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

1 Millbank

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners if he will list those others occupying parts of 1 Millbank indicating in each case *(a)* the square footage occupied and *(b)* the rental received. [164051]

Sir Stuart Bell: Central Lobby Consultants occupy 1,299 square feet at 1 Millbank and Parliamentary Contacts occupy 250 square feet. The whole of the adjacent sites at 2 Millbank and 5 Great College Street are also let.

The Church Commissioners do not publish income figures for individual tenants as this information is commercially sensitive.

DEFENCE

Defence Estates

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much public money was spent on the relaunch of Defence Estates prior to April 2003. [163547]

Mr. Caplin: A total of £24,066 was spent on the re-launch of Defence Estates, which took place on 1 April 2003.

National Servicemen (Memorial)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to promote the establishment of a memorial to the UK's post-1945 National Servicemen. [162874]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence receives many requests from individuals, ex-Servicemen's groups and charitable organisations seeking assistance with various projects. The vast majority have worthy goals and can make an equally compelling case for support. It will therefore continue to be our policy not to promote any specific projects, such as that advocated by the hon. Member, as it would be divisive and open to criticism from unsuccessful applicants, if the Government were to pick and choose which to support.

A memorial dedicated to all National Servicemen was unveiled last year at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

Press Officers

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many press officers were employed in his Department in each year from 1990–91 to 2003–04; what the total cost was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [162843]

Mr. Caplin: Information for the years from 1994–95 to 2001–02 was provided in my letter of 14 July 2003 to the hon. Member, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House.

Information for the years 1990–91 to 1993–94 is no longer available. Information for the years 2002–03 to 2003–04 is currently being researched and I will write again to the hon. Member once the information is to hand.

RAF Innsworth

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what account he will take of the impact on the community of Innsworth, Gloucestershire, when deciding on the future of RAF Innsworth; and if he will make a statement; [163921]

(2) what discussions he plans to have with personnel at RAF Innsworth, Gloucestershire, about the future of the base; and if he will make a statement. [163920]

Mr. Ingram: The implications of defence decisions on Service and civilian personnel, and indeed the wider community will be actively considered in the analysis and decision making process.

Personnel at RAF Headquarters Personnel and Training Command have been informed of the planned work to examine the possible collocation of the RAF Headquarters and they will continue to be updated at appropriate intervals. A communication strategy, including consultation with Trades Unions, is in place to ensure dialogue between the study team and all staff.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make a decision on the future of RAF Innsworth, Gloucestershire; and if he will make a statement. [163922]

Mr. Ingram: I expect a report on the findings of the study into the possible collocation of the RAF Headquarters before the end of the year, and will make a decision thereafter.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what factors he will take into account when deciding on the future of RAF Innsworth, Gloucestershire; and if he will make a statement. [163923]

Mr. Ingram: In reaching a decision on the future of RAF Headquarters Personnel and Training Command, the operational and financial implications of the options under consideration together with the relevant environmental, social and economic effects, including the impact of other relevant studies will be considered.

Retirement Age

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department intends to remove its compulsory retirement age of 60. [162902]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* The Department is now reviewing its retirement age policy for all MOD Civil Servants below the Senior Civil Service. The review will also consider when the Department should implement any changes resulting from that review.

The Department's current retirement age of 60 does not apply to all grades; some have a retirement age of 65 and others somewhere between 60 and 65.

Secondments

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG have made to his Department since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from his Department have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [156920]

Mr. Caplin: Information available on personnel seconded to the Ministry of Defence from the above named companies from 2001 is as follows:

Inward Secondments

Company	*Start date*	*End Date*	*Tasks*
PricewaterhouseCoopers	October 2000	October 2001	Commercial Adviser
Ernst & Young	February 2001	February 2002	Commercial Adviser
Ernst & Young	October 2001	August 2002	Commercial Adviser
PricewaterhouseCoopers	August 2002	August 2004	Commercial Adviser

There are no outward secondments.

Project Angus

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the purpose, cost and duration of Project Angus. [163970]

Mr. Caplin: Project Angus is the construction of a new Fleet headquarters building at Whale Island, Portsmouth. Construction started in February 2003 and the completed building will be handed over to the Royal Navy in May 2004, at an estimated final cost of £22 million. This is the final step in the Fleet First re-organisation of the Fleet headquarters which has created a better integrated and more effective Fleet headquarters and saved around £10 million a year in running costs.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Connexions

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the performance of Connexions Direct is assessed. [161032]

Margaret Hodge: Connexions Direct is assessed by measuring their performance against indicators which include the service being available 18 hours a day and the promptness of answering. In addition, a pilot user survey has been conducted and a mystery shopping exercise is being undertaken.

Sure Start

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding is being allocated to Sure Start in the next three years. [161865]

Margaret Hodge: Sure Start was allocated funding of £1,223 million for 2004–05 and £1,510 million for 2005–06 in the last spending review, in summer 2002. Funding for 2006–07 will be confirmed, later this year.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Coastal Damage Compensation

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was *(a)* allocated to and *(b)* spent on coastal damage compensation in each of the last five years. [163614]

Mr. Morley: Defra does not allocate funds to be spent on coastal damage compensation. Except in limited circumstances no compensation is payable to those affected by flooding or erosion, including cases where it is decided not to defend a particular area, or to undertake managed realignment. This approach, adopted by successive governments, is justified by current legislation which provides operating authorities with permissive powers to undertake flood and coastal defence works. There is no general obligation to build or maintain defences at all or to a particular standard. Consonant with this approach, the legislation also makes no provision for compensation from public funds to persons whose property or land are affected by erosion or flooding.

Energy Efficiency

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what energy targets she plans to introduce for the Government estate to reduce energy consumption per square metre of buildings floor area over the present decade. [161199]

Mr. Morley: The government published on 26 February 2004, the energy section of the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate. This contained all of the energy targets for the central government estate including the following:

> "Government Departments to increase the energy efficiency of the buildings on their estate, measured in terms of kWh of (1) fuel and (2) electricity use per square metre of buildings floor area, or estate area[1], by 15 per cent. by 2010–11, relative to 1999–2000."

[1] Due to the diversity of the Government Estate, Departments can report using either the floor area of their buildings, or the total estate area.

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many grants to aid domestic energy efficiency there were in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* the Burton constituency in each of the last three years; and what the total cost of such grants was. [161840]

Mr. Morley: A number of programmes exist to improve the energy efficiency of a household including schemes run by local authorities and work of the Energy Saving Trust. The Department does not collect data on the number of grants awarded and their cost through these schemes.

Under the Warm Front scheme, which is the main Government scheme for tackling fuel poverty and is funded by the Department, between June 2000 and December 2003, 3,764 grants were awarded in the Staffordshire area with a total cost of around £2 million. Of these, 1,653 grants were awarded in the Burton area with a cost of £390,000.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many homes in Buckingham have benefited from the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme. [161570]

Mr. Morley: The New Home Energy Efficiency Scheme is now marketed as Warm Front. Between the launch of the scheme in June 2000 and the end of December 2003, 341 households in the Buckingham constituency received assistance from the scheme.

Advisory Committee on Packaging

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* total budget and *(b)* budget for administration for the Advisory Committee on Packaging was in financial year 2002–03. [162171]

Mr. Morley: The Advisory Committee on Packaging does not have a dedicated budget, but the ACP and its activities are supported by the Defra Waste Management Division's Producer Responsibility Unit.

Agricultural Subsidies

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what subsidy will be given to farms on the Somerset levels in the financial years *(a)* before and *(b)* after the mid-term Common Agricultural Policy reform. [161883]

Alun Michael: The subsidy provided to farmers in the Somerset area for the EAGGF 2003 year (16 October 2002 to 15 October 2003) was £29,753,136.13. This includes any receipts under the following schemes: Arable Area Payments, Beef Special Premium, Sheep Annual Premium, Suckler Cow Premium, Slaughter Premium, Extensification Payment and Hill Farming Allowance. We have made no projections of receipts at a county level in future years.

Asgard Systems

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will establish an inquiry into the part played by her Department in the liquidation of Asgard Systems Ltd. of Bedford. [156718]

Alun Michael: I do not consider it appropriate for the Department to hold such an inquiry. Advice was given to Asgard Systems Ltd. primarily by the Environment Agency, which has a well established "Complaints and Commendations Procedure" for any complaints against it.

Badgers/Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures can be taken against obviously diseased badgers observed in areas outside the current Krebs trials areas. [158376]

Mr. Bradshaw: Badgers are a protected species and the terms of their protection, including the restricted circumstances when action might be taken against them, are set out in the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answers of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1W, and 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 156W, on badgers, whether increases in badger population have occurred in areas in which the 1990 badger survey predicted that it was unlikely that further significant increases would occur. [158383]

Mr. Bradshaw: There has been no national survey of badgers since the mid-1990s[1] and therefore, the necessary information to answer this question is not available.

[1] "Changes in the British badger population, 1988 to 1997" by G. Wilson, S. Harris and G. McLaren (1997), published by the People's Trust for Endangered Species (ISBN 1 85580 018 7).

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she has collated on the effectiveness of reactive culling of badgers in TB breakdown areas as a mechanism of control when applied as part of an overall control package. [158384]

Mr. Bradshaw: On the basis of current scientific evidence, reactive culling as carried out in the Randomised Badger Culling Trial is not viable as a policy option. There are circumstances in which localised culling of badgers might be considered in the future, for example in combination with a vaccine or live test for bovine TB, but neither of these is currently available.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the presence of TB in the badger population presents a risk of infection to other wildlife. [158385]

Mr. Bradshaw: Theoretically, it is possible for badgers to pass TB to other wildlife species, but the low level of incidence of the disease in species such as foxes (which can share sett space with badgers) and small rodents suggests they are not a significant risk.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the value of *(a)* percussion guns and *(b)* snares as a means of controlling badger populations. [158387]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information is as follows:

(a) The use of percussion guns in the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT) has not been considered; they are a weapon for stunning, not killing, animals.

(b) The use of snares by the Department in the past, and recent work in Ireland, would suggest that a higher trapping efficiency can be achieved than by cage trapping. However, the decision was taken, primarily on welfare grounds, that snares would not be used in the RBCT.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice has been given by her Department to farmers in the Peak District when repairing stone walls and stiles regarding contact with badger latrines; and what advice has been given to members of the public. [158390]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Rural Development Service (RDS) of Defra provide grants under the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) to farmers and land managers in the Peak District National Park to restore drystone walls and construct stiles. These grants are made through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) or the Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) scheme.

Technical guidance is provided concerning the choice of materials used and methods of construction. However, CSS and ESA Project Officers do not give advice to landowners, land managers, drystone wall contractors or members of the public over the health implications of contact with badger latrines. Where farms are open under the educational access component of the CSS, biosecurity measures are required including facilities for hand washing. However, this general guidance is not specific to contact with badger latrines.

Any one seeking advice on badgers should contact my Department's National Wildlife Management Team (Tel: 0845 6014523; e-mail: enquiries.southwest @defra.gsi.gov.uk). I am informed that the Team has not received any recent queries regarding badger latrines from farmers or members of the public in the Peak District.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the latest average cost is of carrying out a full post-mortem examination of a badger carcase to determine its TB status, including the cost of microbiological testing. [158392]

Mr. Bradshaw: The average cost per carcase of the post mortem examination, as used for badgers taken in the randomised culling trial, including both the TB culture costs and the small number of associated histopathological tests, is currently £87.22.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answers of 6 January, *Official Report*, column 250W and 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1186W, on badgers, what assessment she has made of the reliability of the live test for TB in badgers; and what assessment she has made of the risk that translocated badgers released after testing are not free from TB infection. [158412]

Mr. Bradshaw: The indirect ELISA for badgers (known as the live test) was evaluated using blood samples collected from 1982 badgers killed during statutory badger removal operations in 1991 to 1993. The sensitivity of the test was 40.7 per cent. and the specificity 94.3 per cent. The positive predictive value (the percentage of positive test results where the animal was confirmed as infected) of the test was 67.5 per cent. the negative predictive value (the percentage of negative test results where the animal was confirmed as uninfected) 84.6 per cent. A project (development of immunological assays for the detection of Mycobacterium bovis infection in badgers), funded by the Department, is investigating this area. The project is due to end in March 2005 and the final report should be available shortly afterwards.

Regarding the assessment of the risk that translocated badgers are not free from TB infection, it is current practice to test all candidates for translocation using the live test three times before release. If any test is positive, then that animal and members in its group are not released. A released animal which has had three negative test results has a 2.7 per cent. risk of actually being infected if it comes from a population with a background prevalence of infection of 10 per cent.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her consultation document, "Preparing for a new GB strategy on bovine tuberculosis", page 23, figure 3, what the forecast public expenditure for each year from 2004–05 to 2012–13 is, broken down by main cost centres. [157938]

Mr. Bradshaw: Figure 3 on page 23 of the document "Preparing for a new GB strategy on bovine tuberculosis" represents a projection of the costs of current policies. The forecast for GB public expenditure for the next three years is shown in the following table by main cost centres.

Funding for TB surveillance, control and research

£000

	2003–04 Forecast	2004–05 Allocation	2005–06 Allocation
Veterinary Directorate (including Wildlife Unit and Veterinary Laboratories Agency)	13,794	14,725	14,730
State Veterinary Service	30,753	37,550	41,550
Animal Disease Control Division	26,217	24,958	24,958
Science Directorate	3,944	3,905	3,905
Total	74,708	81,138	85,143

Detailed budgets which can be broken down by cost centre are not available beyond the Spending Review 2002 period.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received on the awarding of grants to farmers to upgrade isolation facilities for bought-in cattle to improve TB controls. [157957]

Mr. Bradshaw: No formal representations have been received regarding grants to upgrade isolation facilities for bought-in cattle.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what funds are available from European Union sources to assist the financing of TB *(a)* testing and *(b)* monitoring schemes. [158371]

Mr. Bradshaw: The EU Veterinary Fund, which aims to ensure financial support to member states for expenditure to help control or eradicate certain diseases, is set down in Council Decision 90/424. The total budget is set annually and allocations to disease control programmes in member states are made according to priorities proposed by the Commission and agreed by member states.

In 2004, €135,500,000 is allocated to "animal disease eradication and monitoring programmes and monitoring of the physical conditions of animals that could pose a public-health risk linked to an external factor". TB is one of the diseases covered by this part of the fund and €6,830,000 is allocated to TB controls.

Council and Commission decisions and regulations can be read online on Eur-lex. http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/index.html.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many additional staff she estimates will be required by local authorities to enforce her proposed Tuberculosis (England) Order 2004 over the first five years of its application; [158372]

(2) what consultations she has had with local authorities and their representative bodies on the resource implications arising from the enforcement of her proposed Tuberculosis (England) Order. [158373]

Mr. Bradshaw: Consideration of the costs to local government will be considered fully in the final Regulatory Impact Assessment for the proposed new Tuberculosis (England) Order 2004.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average time has been between a TB reactor being reported, the carrying out of microbiological confirmation tests and the reporting of results back to farms in areas other than the Krebs areas since the trials began. [158389]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information requested is kept on individual files for each TB breakdown and cannot be provided except at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what she estimates the resource implications are of seeking a full regime of pre- and post-movement testing of cattle from one and two year testing herds to all three and four year receiving herds in terms of *(a)* additional veterinary hours required, *(b)* time inputs required by livestock owners and managers and *(c)* the costs of testing. [158391]

Mr. Bradshaw: None. The proposal as set out in the consultation document 'Preparing for a new GB strategy on bovine TB' is for pre-movement testing of cattle moving from one and two year testing herds to other herds. The resource implications of this proposal will be estimated as part of the consultation process which will involve discussions with veterinary and farming interests.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what the average cost was to livestock farmers, per head of stock examined, of facilitating the conduct of official TB tests in their herds; [158393]

(2) what the average cost to a cattle herd owner of the application of a TB2 restriction notice was in the last period for which figures are available; [158668]

(3) pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 216W, what assessment she has made of whether milk production on farms which have suffered multiple TB breakdowns is economically sustainable in the absence of compensation for consequential losses. [158802]

Mr. Bradshaw: The cost of TB to farmers in Great Britain is currently being assessed. Defra has commissioned Reading University to carry out research into the economic impacts of TB and alternative control policies in Great Britain. A report is expected shortly and a summary of the findings will be published on the Defra website in due course.

It is for the individual farmer to decide if his or her business is economically sustainable or not.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the TB testing of badger carcases from road traffic accidents outside TB hotspot areas. [158394]

Mr. Bradshaw: On advice from the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISG), a limited Road Traffic Accident (RTA) survey is being conducted in seven counties in England (Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Dorset). The objective of the survey is to determine, with the ISG's help, if RTA data can provide an accurate indication of the prevalence of "M. bovis" (the causative organism for bovine TB) in badgers by comparing it with the data from the randomised badger culling trial. The Central Science Laboratory (CSL) has been employed to collect badger carcasses for the project since 1 June 2002.

In addition, Defra is carrying out a survey of badgers killed in road accidents in the Furness peninsula following an unexplained rise in bovine TB incidents in south west Cumbria.

We are awaiting the results of the validation of the survey in the badger culling trial areas before taking any decisions about extending the survey area further. There are also logistical and budgetary problems in extending the RTA survey.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many applications for section 10 licences under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, permitting the killing of badgers, have been made by *(a)* farmers and *(b)* other private landowners; and how many have been issued to each for the express purpose of preventing the spread of disease, in each year since the Act has been in force. [158395]

Mr. Bradshaw: When members of the public approach my Department with a badger problem, most come seeking our advice on how they can resolve their problem. Only a small number have a clear idea of what action they want to take. Because of this it is not possible to distinguish between applications on the basis of whether the applicant wanted to kill the badgers, relocate them or simply close a problem sett. Thus, we cannot provide figures for the first part of this question.

The number of licences issued to farmers and other private landowners for the express purpose of preventing the spread of disease in each year for which there are computer records, is as follows:

	Number
2001	0
2002	0
2003	0

We are not aware of any licences to kill badgers being issued to farmers or other private landowners prevent the spread of disease between 1992 and 2001.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent instructions have been given to state veterinary officials regarding the interpretation of the skin test for TB in cattle. [158396]

Mr. Bradshaw: The interpretation of the single intradermal comparative cervical test (skin test) used in GB for the diagnosis of bovine TB is laid down in Annex B of Council Directive 64/432/EEC (as amended). The existing TB manuals for the State Veterinary Service and Local Veterinary Inspectors reflect this. No changes have been made recently to the interpretation of the skin test for TB in cattle.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of *(a)* programmes in countries other than the UK which have successfully controlled TB in cattle by controlling the disease in wildlife reservoirs and *(b)* the application those programmes might have for the UK. [158397]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra officials remain in contact, and continue to exchange information, with colleagues in other countries that are experiencing problems with the control of TB in cattle where there is a wildlife disease reservoir.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the most recently calculated rate of repeat TB breakdowns in cattle herds is in *(a)* England and *(b)* Scotland. [158414]

Mr. Bradshaw: The most recent information on recurrent (repeat) TB incidents dates back to 2002. This shows that the number of confirmed new TB incidents (CNIs) in herds that had a history of CNI in the previous three years increased by 72 per cent. between 2000 and 2002. This increase was not significantly different from the overall percentage increase in CNIs. In England, approximately 25 per cent. of herds with a CNI in 2002 had a history of CNI in the previous three years. In contrast, none of the 27 Scottish herds affected by CNIs in 2002 had experienced a CNI in the previous three years.

Because of the distorted pattern of TB incidents (breakdowns) caused by the suspension of TB testing during 2001, bovine TB statistics for 2002 may not be representative of a typical year. Similar data on repeat TB breakdowns for2003 has not been collated yet.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether badgers can acquire TB from infected members of other species on which they predate. [158415]

Mr. Bradshaw: The consumption of infected carcases, prey or otherwise, is a potential route for M. bovis infection in badgers.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether adverse effects have been observed in cattle subject to continuous 60-day TB testing. [158429]

Mr. Bradshaw: No adverse effects have been observed in cattle subjected to 60-day (short-interval) tuberculin testing.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she has carried out an assessment of the measures necessary to gain public acceptance of large-scale badger culling. [158805]

Mr. Bradshaw: No such assessment has been carried out.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether her containment policy for bovine TB will also contain the spread of M. bovis in badgers. [159121]

Mr. Bradshaw: No such assessment has been made.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 538W, on badgers, what the source of her definition of epidemic is. [159130]

Mr. Bradshaw: Definitions of the term 'epidemic' that are consistent with that given in the answer on 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 538W, can be found in standard epidemiological textbooks, such as:

1. Thrusfield, M. (1995). Veterinary Epidemiology. 2nd Edition. Blackwell Science, Oxford, UK. (page 26).

2. Last, J. M. (1995). A Dictionary of Epidemiology. 3rd Edition. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK. (page 54).

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether cats resident on farms on which a TB breakdown has occurred are routinely tested for TB infection. [158379]

Mr. Bradshaw: Cats resident on farms on which a TB breakdown has occurred are not routinely tested for TB infection.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many herds are participating in gamma-interferon testing. [158388]

Mr. Bradshaw: By the end of February 2004, 88 herds had been recruited to the gamma-interferon field trial.

In addition, between 1 January 2003 and 29 February 2004, ad-hoc gamma-interferon tests were approved in 19 herds that did not qualify for the field trial. Formal instructions were issued to the State Veterinary Service in November 2003, which provide for the use of the gamma-interferon test in the following circumstances:

to aid decision making in relation to whole or partial herd slaughter in severe TB breakdowns[1];

as a parallel test for non-reactor cattle in ongoing, confirmed TB incidents with a chronic TB problem, but which do not qualify for the field trial[1]; or

as a serial test, to resolve skin test reactors or inconclusive reactors in prolonged unconfirmed TB incidents within low TB prevalence areas where there is a suspicion of non-specific reactivity to the skin test[2].

[1] gamma-interferon used to enhance overall sensitivity of testing,
[2] gamma-interferon complements skin test to achieve better specificity.

TB Strategy

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the implications of the Common Agricultural Policy mid-term review for the development of a TB strategy. [158386]

Mr. Bradshaw: In developing policies on bovine TB Government will take into account the structure and economics of the cattle farming industry, including the impact of the 2003 CAP reform agreement.

Biofuels

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the level of duty on bio-ethanol. [162029]

Mr. Morley: The Department is in regular contact with Treasury Ministers to discuss a whole range of matters related to energy and environmental policy. In addition, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, meets regularly with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on a wide range of matters that affect the business of the Department. As with all tax matters, decisions on tax incentives rest with the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Brucellosis (Cornwall)

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures her Department has put in place to contain the recent outbreak of brucellosis in Cornwall. [163150]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 23 March 2004]:* The cow which gave rise to confirmation of the brucellosis outbreak had been immediately subject to movement restrictions following her abortion on 9 March. No movements of cattle onto or off the premises of the infected herd were permitted from the time that indications of possible Brucella infection were first reported on 12 March. The four cows and one bull which tested seropositive for brucellosis during investigations were slaughtered on 18 March following confirmation of brucellosis that day; the remainder of the herd was slaughtered on 19 March. Precautionary movement restrictions have also been placed on seven neighbouring herds which are currently undergoing further tests and on the herd which supplied two bulls to the farm during the preceding 12 months; no other cattle apart from seven calves from a neighbouring premises have been brought onto the farm during that time. In the last year there have been only a small number of movements off the farm, other than movements direct to slaughter. These animals are being traced and will be tested. Cattle not born in Great Britain and imported into Cornwall and Devon are also being traced.

Pesticides

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will review the use of chlorpyrifos as an insecticide. [163080]

Alun Michael: The use of chlorpyrifos has been under review since 1998 as part of the UK review of anticholinesterase compounds. The human health aspects were completed in June 2003 and the review of environmental effects is on-going.

In addition chlorpyrifos is being reviewed on a Europe-wide basis under Council Directive 91/414. Spain has lead responsibility in taking forward that review.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of chlorpyrifos on riparian bird life. [163081]

Alun Michael: The Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) has assessed the effect of chlorpyrifos on birds as a part of an ongoing review of this active substance. The ACP concluded that there is a negligible risk of chlorpyrifos accumulating in fish, and that as a result the risk to birds that eat fish is acceptable.

Risk assessments were also made for other potential routes of bird exposure. Further data have been requested to confirm that chlorpyrifos used on grass and cereals does not pose an acute or short term risk to grazing birds, or to birds eating small insects in orchards. Information has also been requested on granular forms of chlorpyrifos to address any acute and short-term risk to birds consuming chlorpyrifos in this form. These data must be submitted by August 2006.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of chlorpyrifos on fly fishing. [163082]

Alun Michael: No specific assessment has been made of the impact of chlorpyrifos on fly fishing.

However the Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) is assessing the effect of chlorpyrifos on aquatic life (including fish) as a part of an on-going review of this active substance. At the ACP's request, approval holders have submitted a strategy (including a timetable for the provision of further data) to help complete this assessment. The ACP is currently awaiting further detailed study protocols for agreement.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with her EU counterparts on reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. [162081]

Alun Michael: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State regularly meets her counterparts from the other member states to discuss CAP reform, most recently she met with the Italian and Dutch Agriculture Ministers. Aspects of the CAP reform package agreed in June 2003 were discussed at the Council meeting on 24 February. At its meeting on 23 March the council discussed reforms of sectors that were not included in last year's reforms: olive oil, table olives, tobacco, cotton and hops. My right hon. Friend also recently had various discussions with Commissioner Fischler on CAP reform issues, both bilaterally and as part of meetings of the Agriculture Council. CAP reform is very important domestically and internationally and we continue to press our case with the Commission and other member states at Ministerial bilateral and Council meetings, as well as at official level meetings.

Cod Fishery

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average cod by-catch recorded from Scottish vessels fishing in ICES *(a)* IVa and *(b)* IVb areas was during 2003. [161992]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no significant by-catch of cod known in the trawl fisheries targeting pelagic species like herring in the North Sea, but between 3.5 per cent. and 7 per cent. of all UK cod landings from the North Sea are taken from the Fladen fishing grounds, where the fishery predominantly targets Nephrops (prawns).

However, the by-catch of cod varies between different fisheries: there is no meaningful fleet or area average. A further complication is that catch composition may differ from recorded landings because of discarding at sea for example: catch composition is only observed in a sample of fishing trips.

Rod Fishing

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many rod fishing licence applications have been made since the introduction of the online facility; and how many of these were made online. [162809]

Mr. Bradshaw: The figures on rod fishing licence applications are as follows:

Rod Licence Sales	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Total rod licence sales	1,137,478	1,188,400	1,227,680
Internet sales of rod licences	12,531	31,501	49,461

Flooding

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much money was given to the Wessex Flood Defence Committee in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04. [161880]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is required to arrange for its flood defence functions, except for certain financial ones, to be carried out by Regional Flood Defence Committees (RFDCs). The RFDC may arrange for all or any of these functions to be carried out by Local Flood Defence Committees (LFDCs) under a scheme approved by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

I understand from the Agency that the total of Defra grant and levies on local authorities for the three local flood defence committees under the Wessex RFDC was £23.2 million in 2002–03 and is estimated to be £25.5 million in 2003–04.

Other funding is obtained from developers and district councils for specific projects.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under which powers the Environment Agency is charging for maps of flood risk areas; and if she will make a statement. [161961]

Mr. Morley: Where charges are made to certain businesses for specific requirements, the Environment Agency's power to charge derives from the Environmental Information Regulations 1992 (as amended) and from sections 37 and 43 of the Environment Act 1995.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many businesses in *(a)* Devon and *(b)* Cornwall are owed money by the Department for carrying out work during the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001; how much is owed for (i) Devon and (ii) Cornwall; and what the largest amount owing to each business is. [162714]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare (Brian Cotter) on 6 January, 2004, *Official Report*, column 261W.

The Department is in dispute with one contractor in Devon over charges arising, or which are claimed to have arisen, from the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak. It would be inappropriate to comment on a case that is the subject of alternative disputes resolution procedures and, possibly, litigation in due course.

Currently, the Department has no disputes with contractors in Cornwall.

GM Crops

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research is being conducted into inter-species gene flow between GM maize and other plants. [162062]

Mr. Morley: I am not aware of any research in the UK on inter-species gene flow between GM maize and other plants.

The Department has commissioned a project looking at intra-specific gene flow between non-GM maize crops in existing maize crops in the UK using naturally occurring molecular markers. A small part of the project includes an examination of the likelihood of maize cross-pollinating with rye grass, a distantly related species. Maize originates in the Americas and there is no evidence that it can cross-pollinate with any UK species under natural conditions.

More research has been conducted in central America where cultivated maize varieties grow alongside sexually compatible wild relatives, but the findings have no relevance to UK conditions.

The GM science review recently assessed the evidence for inter-species gene flow (www.gmsciencedebate.org.uk, First report, Chapter 7.3). They concluded that in the UK, for crops including maize, that gene flow to wild relatives was 'not an issue'.

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether she has communicated the shortcomings of the farm scale evaluation maize trials to the lead competent authority in France in accordance with Directive 2001/18/EC; and whether she has requested a variation in the conditions attached to the Part C consent for Chardon LL fodder maize; [162923]

(2) when she was informed that cattle feeding studies involving Chardon LL fodder maize had been requested by the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment and the Advisory Committee on Animal Feeding Stuffs; [162979]

(3) whether *(a)* meat and *(b)* milk from the cattle involved in the Chardon LL feeding studies at Reading University has entered the food chain; [162982]

Mrs. Jackie Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she gave consent for harvested Chardon LL forage maize from farm-scale evaluation sites to be taken off-site and used in cattle feeding studies at the Reading University Centre for Dairy Research. [163076]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 23 March 2004]*: I am not aware of any shortcomings of the farm-scale evaluation (FSE) maize trials, the results have been endorsed by both the Scientific Steering Committee overseeing the evaluations and the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE).

Officials sent the results of the Farm Scale Evaluations, together with the non-specialist and scientific summaries, to the European Commission and the Competent Authorities of the Member States for their information on 20 and 21 October 2003. ACRE published its advice on the FSE results on 13 January 2004, and this advice was also sent to the Commission and the Competent Authorities on that date. On 9 March 2004 officials wrote to the French Competent Authority, which issued the relevant consent on behalf of all EU Member States, seeking amendments to the consent for Bayer T25 GM maize (Chardon LL) to limit herbicide use with the crop in line with ACRE'S advice.

Neither the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment nor the Advisory Committee on Animal Feeding stuffs (ACAF) has requested cattle feeding studies involving Chardon LL fodder maize. ACAF has advised, on the basis of the data already submitted, that it is content that the T25 maize grain and its products pose no more risk as animal feed than non-GM maize varieties.

The GM maize used in the farm scale evaluations has Europe wide marketing consent for use in animal feed so no consent was required to use the harvested crop in the cattle feeding study carried out at the University of Reading.

Although there is no legal requirement to withhold the milk or meat from the food chain the protocol for the Reading University study required that the milk from the dairy cows did not enter the food chain during the period of the study.

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will ensure that, if Chardon LL is placed on the National Seeds Register, it will only be grown in the UK in the future with a herbicide regime exactly the same as that employed in the farm-scale evaluation programme. [162924]

Mr. Morley: On 9 March 2004 officials wrote to the French Competent Authority, which issued the relevant consent on behalf of all EU Member States, seeking

amendments to the consent for Bayer T25 GM maize (Chardon LL) to limit herbicide use with the crop in line with ACRE'S advice on the FSE results.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she was informed of the recommendation of Professor David Beever that no new maize variety should be placed upon the National Seeds Register unless it achieves a whole-plant target of 32 per cent. [163169]

Mr. Morley: The dry matter content achieved for maize crops depends on location, climate and variety. Views on the optimum value vary and the realistic situation is that it falls within a range of around 28–32 per cent., depending on local factors. The importance of dry matter content is taken into account in the National List system, but it is only one of a number of factors which are assessed.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the involvement of Grainseed in the conduct of the National List trials for Chardon LL in 1998 and 1999, on behalf of the British Plant Breeders Society, and their impact on the research findings. [163206]

Mr. Morley: A thorough evaluation of all the data used for the assessment of Chardon LL in National List trials was conducted by the independent experts on the Herbage Value for Cultivation and Use (VCU) group. The group recommended that the 1998 Grainseed data were acceptable as part of a valid assessment of the performance of Chardon LL. However, the group recommended that the 1999 Grainseed data should be excluded because of substandard plant populations. This was done and data from a reserve site used instead.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what evidence she has collated, in the absence of ruminant feeding studies, that Chardon LL has added value for cultivation and use in the United Kingdom. [163213]

Mr. Morley: The criterion for adding a variety to the UK National List is that it should, taking its qualities as a whole, represent a clear improvement compared with other forage maize varieties already on the UK List. Chardon has been assessed on this basis and found to meet the performance standards set to indicate a clear improvement in value for cultivation and use. The evidence for this is that in National List trials, Chardon's results met the improvement standards for several important characteristics. Animal feeding studies are not required for this assessment.

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish the results of the Reading University Chardon LL feeding studies involving broiler chickens. [162980]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 23 March 2004]*: I am unaware of any feeding studies undertaken by Reading University involving broiler chickens and GM maize Chardon LL Publication of the results of studies carried out by the University is a matter for them and those funding the work.

Illegal Timber

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she is taking to ensure that illegally logged timber on board MV Greveno does not enter the United Kingdom. [163172]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 23 March 2004]:* The UK is pressing for a new EU import Regulation as part of the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) process. This Regulation would apply to timber imports from FLEGT partner countries. Until this Regulation is in force, Customs have no powers to prevent illegally logged timber from being imported into the UK.

The UK is working closely with the Government of Indonesia to control illegal logging and its associated trade. The UK Government have drawn the shipment of timber on the MV Greveno to the attention of the relevant Indonesian authorities, who will look into the issue immediately.

As requested by the Council of the European Union, the UK Government are also currently examining the feasibility of using national legislation, such as that related to money laundering, to deal with imports of timber that have been produced in contravention of the laws of the producer country.

Ministerial Statements

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reason she did not announce the publication of the 4th Annual Report on UK Progress Towards Sustainable Development by means of a oral statement to the House. [162881]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* If too many announcements are made by oral statement at the end of Questions, Parliamentary business could be hindered.

I announced the publication of this annual report by means of a written statement to the House on 16 March.

Rural Transport

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list parishes and towns which have been awarded Parish Transport Grant in each year since the scheme's inception. [162829]

Alun Michael: The following list of town and parish councils have been awarded a Parish Transport grant since the start of the scheme in 2001.

Parish and town councils—1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002

Alstonefield
Acton Trussell and Bednall
Arkholme-with-Cawood
Bamford
Beech Hill
Belton
Bicton
Blockley
Boxford

Bradfield
Braunstone
Cherhill
Dent
Donington
Easingwold
Ellingham
Feock
Folkton
Holy Island
Iden
King's Stanley
Kirkwhelpington
Langport
Lydiard Millicent
Melling-with-Wrayton
Misterton
Nuthall
Rockland St. Mary
Ryton-on-Dunsmore
Sherburn
Snettisham
Surlingham
Totton and Eling
Ventnor
Whittlebury
Winford
Wingham
Wolsingham
Woodhouse
Wye with Hinxhill

Parish and town councils 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003

Acle
Aldenham
Alford
Alrewas and Fradley
Althorne
Atwick
Ballingham
Barlaston
Barlborough
Barrow on Humber
Barton Seagrave
Beckbury
Beeston Regis
Belton-in-Rutland
Bewholme
Blanchland
Bletchingly
Bramham cum Oglethorpe
Brampton
Brereton
Brewood
Brington
Brixworth
Broomley and Stocksfield
Broseley
Burgh by Sands
Burgh le Marsh
Burythorpe
Calne
Calverton
Castle Bytham
Charing
Charvil
Church Stretton
Clarborough
Clifford
Cockerham
Cockfield
Craven Arms
Crediton
Crich
Crookham Village
Dalham
Danbury
Denby
Dene Valley
Dickleburgh and Rushall
Eccleshall
Eggington
Ercall magna
Filton
Finchingfield
Fletching
Great Lumley
Great Ness and Little Ness
Great Tey
Greenhead
Hadstock
Hallaton
Haltwhistle
Hambleton
Hartington upper Quarter
Hassocks
Hawkhurst
Hednesford
Heydour
Holme upon Spalding Moor
Holy Island
Horam
Ibstock
Ivybridge
Keswick
Kimberley and Carlton Forehoe
Kingston near Lewes
Kirklevington
Kirkwhelpington
Kirton in Lindsey
Kirton in Lindsey
Lakes Parish
Lavenham
Long Buckby
Manaccan
Market Weston
Melksham Without

Middleton Tyas
Milton
Milton Abbas
Moretonhampstead
Napton-on-the-Hill
Old Basing
Oswestry
Oxenhope
Pickering
Riseley
Rockland St. Mary
Ropley
Saughall
Sedbergh
Selston
Sennen
Shawbury
Sherborne
Sheviock
Shinfield
Sodbury
South Creake
Spennymoor
Sporle with Palgrave
Sproatley
St. Breward
St. Ives
St. Leonards and St. Ives
Stainton
Stanhope
Stanton Lacy Parish Council
Stillington
Stoke Goldington
Swaton
Syderstone
Tavistock
Temple Sowerby
Twyford
Ulnes Walton
underskiddaw
Verwood
Vigo
Walkington
Walton upon Trent
Wargrave
Waters Upton
Wavendon
Wawne
Weeting-with-Broomhill
Wellington
Weston
Weston
Westow
Wetton
Whaley Bridge
Whalton
Whittington
Wilsford
Winston
Wotton Town Council
Wrangle

Parish and town councils—1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004.

Acle
Aldenham
Alderwasley
Allendale
Althorne
Alvescot
Ansford
Aylesham
Aymestry
Barlaston
Barlborough
Beckley
Beech hill
Bircham
Bishops Tachbrook
Bolstone
Boroughbridge
Bozeat
Brandon and Byshottles
Braunstone
Brixworth
Broughton
Broughton Astley
Burbage
Burnham Market
Burton in Lonsdale
Burton upon Stather
Butleigh
Castle Hedingham
Chedburgh
Church Broughton
Clapham cum Newby
Colton
Crich
Cricklade Town Council
Crowle and Ealand
Dalham
Denby Dale
Desford
Dickleburgh and Rushall
Ditcheat
East Wittering
Eggington
Ellesmere Town Council
Falmouth
Findern
Fishlake and Sykehouse
Gerrards Cross
Giggleswick
Goodrich
Great Carlton
Great Gonerby
Great Ryburgh

Great Tey
Hallaton
Hallow
Hamble-le-Rice Parish Council
Harrietsham
Hathern
Haxey
Hilton
Holt
Holy Island
Horsington
Horton in Ribblesdale
Humber
Hungerford
Kinver
Kirkby Malhamdale
Kirkwhelpington
Langcliffe
Langport
Lavenham
Littleport Parish Council
Malvern Wells
Market Weston
Mayfield
Melbury Osmond
Merton
Messingham
Mickle Trafford
Northam
Nunney
Dakthorpe and Donisthorpe
Oldland
Ousby
Riding Mill
Riseley
Rockland St. Mary
Saltfleetby All Saints
Sherburn
Shincliffe
Snettisham
Sporle with Palgrave
Spratton
Stainforth
Surlingham
Tetney
Thorne
Thurston
Ticehurst Parish Council
Tutnall and Cobley
Upton upon Severn
Waddington
Wavendon
Weeting-with-Broomhill
Weston
Witley
Wrockwardine
Wye with Hinxhill
Yatton

Note:
Where a group of Parishes have applied for a grant, only the lead Parish or Town council is recorded by the Countryside Agency.

Power Station Emissions

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what emissions were recorded for each power station in each year from 1998 to 2002; and what formula was used to allocate emission permits to each power station. [156102]

Mr. Morley: The Government has used the Department of Trade and Industry's updated energy projections (UEP) as a basis for calculating sectoral and installation level allocations for the power generation sector. The sector allocation is based on UEP projections of carbon dioxide less the amount the Government has decided power stations are to contribute to meeting national climate change targets and a portion to be set-aside for the New Entrants Reserve. This sectoral allocation is then allocated pro-rata to individual power stations according to historical emissions.

The power generation sectoral allocation was calculated using the following formula:

Average annual phase 1 allocation =
Average annual phase 1 emissions projections (147.8 MtCO2)
—Annual contribution to achieving EU ETS saving (5.5 MtCO2 by 2010^)
—Annual contribution to the New entry reserve (8.2%)
i.e. Average annual phase 1 allocation
= 147.8–(1.8^)–[0.08*(147.8–1.8)]
= 134 million allowances
^Extrapolating back from 5.5MtCO2 in 2010, you get an average of 1.8MtCO2 saving over the three years of phase 1.

A significant proportion of the power generators have asserted that their historical emissions data is commercially confidential. We cannot publish the data without first consulting these operators and we have written to them seeking their views about the publication of this data. Subject to the response received from individual companies, I will write to the right hon. Member with the historical emissions data for power generators in the UK.

River Invertebrates

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will meet representatives of angling associations to discuss the assistance which they can provide in the monitoring of invertebrates in rivers. [163078]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 24 March 2004]:* No. However, the Government are aware of concerns over invertebrate numbers in rivers. The Environment Agency has undertaken evaluation of invertebrate data collected for General Water Quality monitoring; this analysis continues and is moving to establish definitive research to identify the causes in the decline of invertebrate numbers. The Environment Agency is engaged with angling organisations as to how anglers may help in developing this work. The Government will

continue to encourage the Environment Agency to proceed with the research and collaboration with anglers and other interested bodies.

Sewerage

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is her policy to improve the liaison between local authorities and sewerage undertakers to control the rat population in sewers and drains more effectively. [162400]

Mr Morley *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* Yes. In 1999, we worked with the Local Government Association and WaterUK to prepare and publish a joint protocol, which contained arrangements for closer working relationships between water companies and local authorities in respect of rodent infestations in sewers.

Shellfish

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has made to her European counterparts on a common European approach to the monitoring of toxins in shellfish; and if she will make a statement. [163234]

Mr. Bradshaw: None. This is the policy responsibility of the Food Standards Agency.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking with the Food Standards Agency to minimise shellfish bed closures due to atypical positive results. [163236]

Mr. Bradshaw: The decision on whether to close shellfish beds is the policy responsibility of local Food Authorities, advised by the Food Standards Agency. The Department continues to stay in close contact with the Agency on a whole range of issues relating to the atypical positive results to ensure the problem is fully investigated and the appropriate actions are taken.

Sumatran Tiger

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to help preserve the Sumatran tiger. [162898]

Mr. Morley: The Government are taking action through our participation in multilateral environmental agreements, notably the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, which help safeguard the Sumatran tiger and other endangered species. The Government also provides funds to support "21st Century Tiger", a wild tiger conservation partnership between the Zoological Society of London and Global Tiger Patrol, which has undertaken three projects on the Sumatran tiger over the last four years.

Waste Re-use

Mr. Peter Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has had from *(a)* the fuel industry and *(b)* environmental groups on the manufacture of road fuel from waste plastics. [162283]

Mr. Morley: The Department is not aware of receiving any recent representations, on the manufacture of road fuel from waste plastics, from either the fuel industry or environmental groups. The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) has, in the past, received inquiries on this issue. However, because WRAP'S remit is to develop markets for recycled materials, and the manufacture of road fuel from plastics does not meet the definition of recycling in the Packaging Directive (2004/12/EC), the issue has not been pursued.

Waste Management

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will end the statutory monopoly of the Waste Management Industry Training and Advisory Body to issue certificates of technical competence. [162441]

Mr. Morley: The Department is currently reviewing the permitting of waste recovery and disposal activities. Informal consultation with stakeholders has shown strong support for continuing to require applicants for permits to demonstrate technical competence, which is a feature of the current waste management licensing system. However, there was also a view that other ways of demonstrating technical competence should be introduced in addition to certificates of technical competence issued by the Waste Management Industry Training and Advisory Board. We are considering how to deliver this as part of a new permitting regime and expect to formally consult on proposals in due course.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Correspondence

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the hon. Member for West Chelmsford will receive a reply to his letter of 27 August 2003 to the Department of Trade and Industry transferred to the Home Office on 4 September 2003 concerning Mrs. S. Hawkard. [152929]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 5 February 2004]:* Baroness Scotland of Asthal QC replied to the hon. Member on 22 March 2004.

Crime Reduction Advisers

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* staffing and *(b)* cost changes have been over the last two years of the units headed by the crime reduction advisers based in regional Government Offices; and what measurable benefits have accrued from the increases. [163328]

Mr. Blunkett: The Home Office transferred 169 staff to the Government Offices (GO) in June 2002 to work on the Crime Reduction agenda, along with funding of £6.104 million. This included 24 research staff who remained on the Home Office payroll but who were co-located in the GOs. The staffing levels have remained the same in 2003–04, though the funding increased to £8.143 million to reflect the full year's cost.

Crime reduction teams in the nine Government Offices are focused on improving the performance of poor performing Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and those with the highest crime rates. They are working closely with these partnerships to identify their strengths and weaknesses across a range of competencies and to develop and implement improvement plans. The deployment of researchers and analysts in each region has also allowed the crime teams to support and develop partnerships more effectively.

National Offender Management Scheme

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has appointed a Programme Board for the National Offender Management Service in accordance with the rules of the Office of Government Commerce. [161165]

Paul Goggins: The implementation of the National Offender Management Service will be overseen by the Chief Executive of the Service and by the National Offender Management Board, chaired by me as Minister for correctional services, with senior representatives from the Home Office, Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Treasury.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the question from the hon. Member for West Chelmsford tabled on 2 February, reference 152929; and if he will make a statement on the reasons for the time taken to respond to the hon. Member's letter of 27 August on behalf of his constituent Mrs. S. Hawkard. [162397]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 26 March 2004.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many cases of computer misuse there were in his Department in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003, broken down by category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [163287]

Hilary Benn: There were no cases of computer misuse within DFID in either 1997 or 2003, which were sufficiently serious as to warrant recording locally or in NISCC (UNIRAS) or to lead to disciplinary action.

Departmental Scientific Adviser

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether his Department has a chief scientific adviser. [162477]

Hilary Benn: In view of the wide range of disciplines required for the tasks of the Department, DFID does not have a single Chief Scientific Adviser. Rather, the Head of Research maintains the liaison function with the Office of Science and Technology, drawing, as appropriate, upon the expertise and perspectives of the various advisory groups in the Department.

DFID is currently reviewing whether these arrangements need to be modified in any way to ensure that its research, policy and country programs continue to make effective use of up to date and relevant scientific knowledge.

Iraq

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what part his Department played in discussions within the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq leading to changes to Iraq's banking legislation; and for what reasons no provision was made for credit unions. [163354]

Hilary Benn: While not directly involved in these discussions, DFID and other Government Departments were aware of the content of the legislation as it was being drafted, and a Bank of England Secondee to the CPA was involved in the drafting process. The main reason for introducing the new banking legislation was to allow for the establishment of a modern banking sector in Iraq as quickly as possible. The legislation is accordingly focused on this basic requirement.

It will be for future Iraqi Governments to decide on the detailed features of their financial system, including provision for credit unions.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what work *(a)* his Department, *(b)* the Coalition Provisional Authority and *(c)* non-governmental organisations are undertaking in Iraq to (i) build confidence in the banking system and (ii) ensure that women have equal access to *(a)* banks and *(b)* other financial services. [163355]

Hilary Benn: Building confidence in the banking system in Iraq will take time, and will depend to a considerable extent on the quality of the legal and institutional framework in which the banking system operates. The newly introduced banking legislation in Iraq is intended to provide the basic framework in which an effective banking sector can develop and gain the confidence of the Iraqi people.

Increasing women's participation in banking and other financial services is being addressed as part of wider efforts to enhance women's participation in political and economic activity generally.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what efforts *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Coalition Provisional Authority are taking to ensure that the judicial system in Iraq offers equal justice for women. [163405]

Hilary Benn: DFID is funding a programme of Justice Sector Support, which is delivering training on international human rights law to 988 members of Iraq's judiciary, prosecution service and Bar Association. This includes training on women's rights. Through support to the Judicial Training Institute and the Iraqi Bar Association, the programme will also promote the professional role of women in the justice system. This is an important start to addressing women's access to justice.

The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) has been monitoring the potential impact of new legislation on women's access to justice. The UK has been a strong advocate of women's rights in Iraq. This is a priority in DFID's interim Country Assistance Plan for Iraq, copies of which are in the Libraries of both Houses.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* resources and *(b)* financial support the (i) Coalition Provisional Authority and (ii) UK Government are offering to develop the Iraqi judicial system. [163406]

Hilary Benn: Coalition Provisional Authority assistance to the Iraqi justice sector includes a team which is providing advice and support to the Ministry of Justice. The team also provides access to resources for the repair, reconstruction and security of Court premises and prison facilities, and the identification and training of judicial and prosecutorial personnel. The CPA also provides advisers to an Office of Human Rights and Transitional Justice. Assistance focuses on forensic assessment and exhumation, training for local capacity building, control of standards and missing persons. The CPA is providing over $99 million project support to the Iraqi justice sector.

DFID has recently agreed justice sector support totalling £2.1 million over two years. The programme aims to strengthen the independence, integrity and professionalism of the Iraqi judiciary, prosecution service and Bar Association and includes training on

human rights law, ethics and standards. Additionally, the justice sector is one of the areas identified for support through the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, to which DFID is making an initial contribution of £70 million.

The UK Government have also seconded one adviser to the CPA team advising the Ministry of Justice, another to advise CPA South, six advisers to the team working on Transitional Justice and Human Rights, and three prison rehabilitation and reform advisers.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Medical Instruments (Abortion)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the top 10 companies in the UK who make medical instruments used in abortions in order of percentage of market share in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04; and which of these companies are based in Essex. [162587]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

This information is not held centrally.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority will implement the recommendations of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management on the long-term management and disposal of radioactive waste. [163645]

Mr. Timms: The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) must have particular regard to relevant Government policy in carrying out its functions, including Government policy on the long-term management of radioactive waste. The Government will decide the policy for the long-term management of higher-level radioactive wastes, taking into account recommendations made to them by the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM).

Post Office

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will instruct Post Office Ltd. to publish a profile of the select teams of personnel involved in walking between each sub-post office that was proposed for closure in the West Derbyshire area plan and the named alternative branch, indicating how many of the personnel were *(a)* wheelchair users, *(b)* physically disabled, *(c)* aged between 65 to 75 years, *(d)* aged between 75 to 85 years, *(e)* aged over 90 years and *(f)* wheeling pushchairs and accompanied by young children. [163744]

Mr. Timms: No. Post Office Ltd. personnel involved in drawing up closure proposals under the urban reinvention programme undertake a detailed on the ground study assessment of the accessibility of the alternative offices identified as the main receiving branches and their facilities for the disabled. This assessment includes the nature of the terrain between the branches, the distance of the journey on foot, including how busy the roads are, where there are pedestrian crossings, traffic lights or underpasses where these need to be crossed. Access by public transport, predominantly by bus, is also checked giving route numbers and distance of stops from the closing and receiving branches. Availability of parking is also checked. All five offices in West Derbyshire proposed for closure have an alternative office within 0.5–1 mile accessible by bus.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of *(a)* businesses and *(b)* addresses in each postcode district (i) received postal deliveries before 9 a.m. Mondays to Fridays in (A) 1997 and (B) 2003 and (ii) are expected to receive such deliveries in 2005. [162494]

Mr. Timms: Conditions on the delivery of mail are a licensing matter for the regulator, Postcomm. The Postal Services Act 2000, and the License granted by Postcomm under it, requires Royal Mail to make one daily delivery to every household in the United Kingdom. It does not specify the time at which this has to be made, and consequently data on delivery percentages at particular times of the day are not available. Postcomm understands from Royal Mail that the reasons for the change to a single delivery were to improve efficiency and to maintain quality of service. Royal Mail believes that addresses on rural and dedicated business delivery routes are in any case highly unlikely to be affected by the move to a single daily delivery.

Small Business

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the small business support schemes funded by her Department open to new business. [163199]

Nigel Griffiths: The small business support schemes currently available are:

Small Firms Loan Guarantee

Grant for Research and Development

Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

In addition, the following five schemes will be available from April:

Knowledge Transfer Networks

Collaborative R&D

Access to best business practice

Support to implement best business practice

Selective finance for investment in England

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action her Department has taken to improve access to finance for small businesses; and if she will make a statement. [163318]

Nigel Griffiths: The DTI has taken a number of steps to improve SME's ability to access investment capital. These include the Regional Venture Capital Funds, UK High Technology Fund, The Community Development Venture Fund (known as the Bridges Fund), Community Investment Tax Relief, Investment Readiness Pilots and Early Growth Funds. We are currently also developing the Enterprise Capital Funds as announced in the 2003 pre-Budget report.

Following our review of business support the Department has built on the success of the Smart scheme and replaced it with two new products, Grant for Research and Development and Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea. The grants available under the new products are potentially bigger than under Smart. During the last two years the number of individuals and small businesses supported annually through Smart and the new products has increased by almost 50 per cent. In addition, the Department has also built upon the success of the Small Firms Loan Guarantee scheme by raising the amount available to manufacturing businesses and extending the scheme to new sectors such as child care and nursery education.

Recently, the Government have taken action to support small business via a wide range of initiatives, as outlined in "The Government Action Plan for Small Business", published on 8 January and available on the Small Business Service Website (www.sbs.gov.uk). It provides a comprehensive account of the significant Government help being made available to small businesses.

Wind Farms

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the economic viability of electricity generated from wind farms. [163622]

Mr. Timms: Modelling carried out to support the recent Innovation Review shows the current cost of onshore wind generation as 3.1–4 p/kWh expected to fall to ~2.5–3.2 p/kWh by 2020 and offshore wind generation as 6.0–7.6 p/kWh expected to fall to ~3.0–4.6 p/kWh by 2020.

These costs are indicative and subject to variation as the economics of electricity generated from both onshore and offshore wind farms are dependent on the amount of wind at the wind farm site. Electricity generated by onshore and offshore wind farms is eligible for support under the Renewables Obligation.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Council Tax Receipts (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the level of council tax receipts collected in Greater London was in each year since 1997, broken down by borough, and what the forecast figures are for the next year. [163766]

Mr. Raynsford: Tabled are the amounts of council tax collected in each London borough and the City of London, irrespective of the financial year to which they relate, in each year from 1996–97 to 2002–03.

Figures for the amounts of council tax received are not requested from local authorities until after the end of the relevant financial year. The amounts received during 2003–04 and future years will depend upon the council tax levels set for each year, changes in the tax base, the collection rates achieved, amounts of council tax benefit expenditure incurred, and amounts collected in respect of earlier years.

Amounts of council tax collected[1]

£000

	1996–97	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Inner London							
City of London	1,417	1,571	1,830	2,091	2,280	2,551	2,644
Camden	43,630	50,506	58,740	60,660	60,840	65,780	69,600
Greenwich	36,751	42,630	46,802	48,267	50,108	52,074	56,861
Hackney	23,071	26,801	26,618	27,787	29,625	36,716	44,568
Hammersmith and Fulham	35,882	44,846	47,912	50,515	53,881	57,654	58,743
Islington	31,335	38,133	40,736	43,349	43,783	45,786	46,640
Kensington and Chelsea	37,334	42,781	45,354	49,832	49,102	55,316	64,412
Lambeth	31,924	41,908	42,931	46,740	46,401	58,396	65,919
Lewisham	32,537	41,976	43,267	46,284	52,070	57,426	62,481
Southwark	34,584	38,100	43,211	45,193	52,919	55,892	61,468
Tower Hamlets	18,419	21,742	23,978	27,478	31,839	34,662	38,699
Wandsworth	35,719	38,825	30,242	36,648	40,158	46,130	41,475
Westminster	25,260	28,980	31,866	34,074	36,137	41,036	44,996
Total Inner London	387,863	458,799	483,487	518,918	549,143	609,419	658,506
Outer London							
Barking and Dagenham	19,475	22,858	25,951	27,766	30,060	32,712	34,808
Barnet	68,042	75,680	83,756	87,787	97,072	103,031	108,870
Bexley	40,037	44,750	49,845	55,312	58,926	64,237	69,686
Brent	27,051	38,836	41,902	48,516	52,570	55,255	60,805
Bromley	60,924	68,076	71,584	78,385	86,353	97,867	105,146
Croydon	57,745	64,627	73,295	83,487	84,302	90,750	92,588
Ealing	45,009	53,922	60,563	66,164	70,814	77,710	84,178
Enfield	46,958	53,461	57,529	63,150	67,115	75,117	82,041
Haringey	35,330	43,165	46,422	49,023	52,552	55,531	59,516
Harrow	39,659	46,560	51,503	55,675	60,842	67,748	72,747

Amounts of council tax collected[1]

£000

	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
Havering	42,674	49,577	54,880	59,243	66,473	72,568	79,367
Hillingdon	43,968	49,477	55,678	61,194	67,696	74,588	81,231
Hounslow	39,162	44,479	47,402	52,496	58,158	64,650	69,485
Kingston upon Thames	30,454	33,410	36,394	42,231	47,128	52,594	58,606
Merton	37,134	42,613	46,781	49,435	54,335	60,845	65,371
Newham	20,040	24,894	26,810	30,400	33,735	38,069	41,568
Redbridge	39,582	45,190	49,297	55,261	59,162	64,173	69,449
Richmond upon Thames	51,112	56,319	57,691	64,420	70,465	77,674	85,077
Sutton	35,534	39,166	43,716	47,441	50,690	55,524	61,623
Waltham Forest	36,215	44,685	44,065	46,192	49,544	53,829	57,988
Total Outer London	816,105	941,745	1,025,064	1,123,578	1,217,992	1,334,472	1,440,150
Total Greater London	1,203,968	1,400,544	1,508,551	1,642,496	1,767,135	1,943,891	2,098,656

[1] Irrespective of the financial year to which it relates.

Green Belt House Building

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of new house building in the South East he estimates will be on Green Belt land up to 2020; and if he will make it his policy to prevent all new house building on Green Belt in the South East up to 2020. [163534]

Keith Hill: Government policy on Green Belts is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2). It remains the policy to protect Green Belts as far as can be seen ahead and boundaries must be altered only exceptionally. Decisions on the need to alter boundaries in order to accommodate development are for regional planning bodies and local planning authorities in the first instance. Any proposals for changes should be brought forward through the regional and local planning process in order to ensure that they are subject to public consultation and scrutiny.

It is not be possible to estimate what proportion of development in the South East will be on Green Belt land up to 2020 until new regional spatial strategies (RSS) for the East of England and the South East are issued, probably in 2006 and 2007 respectively.

Housing Requirement

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to meet the Office for National Statistics prediction of a need for 56 million homes in the United Kingdom by 2021. [163670]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was not able to identify the source of the reference to '56 million homes'. The latest population projections by Government Actuary's Department show the UK population rising from 59 million in 2002 to 63 million in 2021. It is, however, the number of households that relates to homes. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's 1996 based household projections for England show household numbers rising to 24 million in 2021 an increase of 3 million households from 2001.

The Sustainable Communities Plan, published in February 2003, set out a programme of action on how to ensure a better balance between housing supply and demand across the regions.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is addressing the housing shortage in areas of high demand, especially in London and the wider South East, through a step change in housing supply.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is working with local authorities and other stakeholders to ensure that existing planned levels of housing provision are delivered—this means an additional 930,000 homes by 2016.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is also progressing delivery of the Growth Areas—which, along with London, have the capacity to deliver 200,000 additional homes above current planning targets by 2016.

The latest revisions to Regional Planning Guidance now underway are looking further—to 2021. Policy options will take into account the Barker Review's finding that current levels of housing supply are not sufficient. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister agrees that to deliver our commitment to stability and affordability in the housing market a significant increase in development over time is needed. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister needs to consider the scale of such development and how it can be delivered both in high demand areas and in areas suffering problems of low demand. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also need to balance the economic case for increased development against its social and environmental implications. The need to reflect all these issues in our policies, in order to avoid the mistakes of the past, underpins our commitment to deliver, not just more housing, but sustainable communities that people want to live in.

EU Structural Funds

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much local authority funding in the *(a)* North West, *(b)* North East and *(c)* Yorkshire and the Humber for the 2000 to 2006 period has been used for matched funding. [163717]

Mr. Raynsford: As regards European regional funding, this information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. While the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister holds details of public sector contributions to European Regional Development Fund programmes, this is not broken down into individual categories, such as local authorities.

The public sector match funding contributions to the 2000–06 Objective 1 and 2 programmes in the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber, from 2000 until 24 March 2004 are as follows.

Region and programme	Total spend (ERDF plus match funding) (£)	Public sector match funding (£)	Public sector as percentage of total
North West			
Merseyside Objective 1	334,357,790	137,238,950	41
North West Objective 2	401,255,420	189,157,370	47
North East			
North East Objective 2	345,981,850	162,709,330	47
Yorkshire and the Humber			
South Yorks Objective 1	258,080,290	56,745,723	22
Yorkshire and the Humber Objective 2	179,197,960	88,698,149	49

Note:
Exchange rate used £1 = €1.54.

Mobile Phone Masts

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what monitoring his Department undertakes of the extent to which mobile phone companies share masts. [163358]

Keith Hill: The Mobile Operators' Association send statistics relating to site sharing to the Planning Minister every quarter.

Regional Funding

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1712W, on regional assemblies/government, if he will list the funding for the year 2002–03 from each central Government Department to *(a)* the Government offices for and *(b)* the non-departmental public bodies operating in the regions of (i) the North West, (ii) the North East and (iii) Yorkshire and the Humber. [163718]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is as follows.

(a) The funding for the year 2002–03 from each central Government Department to the three Government Offices was as follows:

Government Office	DTLR	DTI	DfES	Defra	HO	DCMS	DoH	Total
North East	4,472	2,671	2,043	323	592	63	58	10,222
North West	7,367	3,953	2,848	628	794	63	117	15,770
Yorkshire and the Humber	4,985	2,571	2,340	564	692	63	62	11,278

Note:
All figures are in £000. DTLR became the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Department for Transport during the year in question and so for the purposes of this table, it is assumed that DTLR was in existence for the whole year.

(b) Information on the funding allocated by each central Government Department to non-departmental public bodies operating in each region is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. In terms of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's non-departmental public bodies, only two, English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation, allocate their funding on a regional basis.

English Partnerships' Departmental Expenditure Limit utilisation for 2002–03 for the three regions was as follows:

	£ million
North East	14.5
North West	28.5
Yorkshire and the Humber	16.0

Programme funding provided by the Housing Corporation to registered social landlords operating in the region in 2002–03 was as follows:

	£ million
North East	23.7
North West	95.6
Yorkshire and the Humber	56.2

Telecommunications Transmissions

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance is given to local planning authorities on the protection of wildlife and domestic animals from the adverse effects of telecommunications transmissions; and what his policy is on where the responsibility lies for the protection of wildlife from such transmissions. [164079]

Keith Hill: The Government's statutory adviser, the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB), has published guidelines on limiting exposure to electromagnetic radiation for the protection of human health. Following the recommendation made in the Stewart Report on Mobile Phones and Health in 2000 the Government adopted the international guidelines on public exposure set by the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) as a precautionary measure to limit electromagnetic radiation exposure from mobile phone base stations.

There is no separate advice for local planning authorities or policy on the exposure of wildlife and domestic animals to electromagnetic radiation.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

BACS

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress her Department has made to manage the changeover from the Bank Automated Clearing System to the new BACSTEL-IP system for electronic payments. [164318]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's Payments and Receipts Contractor has obtained costs for the new hardware and software required for the upgrade, and made plans for the migration to BACSTEL-IP. The contractor's various sponsoring banks, who will drive the migration timetable, have stated that they are in the process of drawing up a timetable for the migration of all their customers.

Film Industry

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what steps she is taking to secure the financial future of the British Federation of Film Societies; [163381]

(2) what representations she has received from film societies concerning their funding from the UK Film Council; [163382]

(3) what steps she is taking to ensure that the British Film Institute actively supports the work of the British Federation of Film Societies and its constituent members; [163384]

(4) what discussions she has had with *(a)* the British Film Institute and *(b)* the British Federation of Film Societies concerning the Annual Films Viewing Weekend and its continuation on a financial basis that supports local film societies. [163385]

Estelle Morris: The UK Film Council, the Government's strategic adviser for film, has recently completed an extensive consultation on its funding and policy priorities for April 2004 to March 2007. The consultation document "Three Years On" proposes that the UK Film Council should continue to fund the British Federation of Film Societies (BFFS) at £100,000 per annum until 2006–07. This funding would form part of the council's substantial budget for its Distribution and Exhibition fund, which aims to promote accessibility to film across the country. This proposal is supported by the British Film Institute. The BFFS would be required to demonstrate the impact of its work in developing the diversity and range of cinema distribution and appreciation. Beyond continuation of funding, the UK Film Council has outlined plans for a fund for digital equipment for film societies, of direct benefit to constituent members of the BFFS.

The DCMS has received no representations from film societies within the last year, concerning funding from the UK Film Council. The UK Film Council has received one letter from BFFS, and will shortly meet the BFFS to discuss the issues raised.

Support for film societies, and thus the BFFS, has been a key consideration in the recent BFI Strategic Review, and is being addressed as part of broader plans to improve access to resources and collections. Stakeholders including the BFFS have been extensively consulted during this process, and the BFI is firmly committed to working more strategically with national bodies such as the BFFS in their advocacy of specialised film culture.

The UK Film Council and BFI will provide ongoing financial support for the Annual Films Viewing Weekend via a heavily subsidised rate for the use of the National Film Theatre (NFT), the event's venue. DCMS has not been involved in the discussions.

Department-Sponsored Activities

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding has been allocated to *(a)* Creative Partnerships, *(b)* Space for Sport and Arts, *(c)* Sports Action Zones and *(d)* Youth Music Action Zones in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06 and (iii) total. [163720]

Estelle Morris: The information is as follows:

(a) Creative Partnerships has been allocated: (i) £25 million in 2004–05; (ii) £45 million in 2005–06; and (iii) a total of £110 million over four years from 2002–06.

(b) Space for Sport and Arts has been allocated total funding of £134 million over the period 2000–05. £128.4 million has been awarded to date.

(c) Sport Action Zones have been allocated: (i) £1.9 million in 2004–05; (ii) £1 million in 2005–06; amounting to a total of (iii) £2.9 million over the two years.

(d) Youth Music Action Zones will receive: (i) £1.58 million in 2004–05; (ii) the allocation for 2005–06 has not yet been finalised; (iii) Youth Music have made available a total of £15 million to support Action Zones in England over the period 2002–06.

Departmental Buildings

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* renovation and *(b)* maintenance projects on buildings (i) owned and (ii) rented by her Department were undertaken in each of the last five years; and what the associated costs were of each. [163950]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS does not occupy any freehold buildings. During the financial year 2000–01 works to a value of £1.5 million were undertaken to link two adjoining buildings and reconfigure accommodation for greater operational efficiency and modernisation of facilities. In 2002 exterior stone cleaning was performed on the main buildings at a cost of £120,000 in compliance with the lease. In 2003 one previously vacant floor of a satellite building was refurbished, at a cost of £46,000 in order to facilitate and accommodate restructuring of part of the Department. In the same year two obsolete fire warning and alarm systems were replaced at a cost of £153,000.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

EU/Israel Trade

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will discuss with his European Union counterparts the suspension of the EU/Israel trade agreements. [163556]

Mr. MacShane: The Government do not intend to raise the suspension of the EU/Israel Association Agreement in upcoming discussions with EU counterparts. The Government believe that, as a friend of Israel and the Palestinians, close engagement provides us with the greatest chance of encouraging both sides to take the necessary steps. We do not believe that suspension of the EU/Israel Association Agreement would bring the parties any nearer to a peaceful resolution.

General Affairs and External Relations Council

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the outcome was of the General Affairs and External Relations Council held on 22 March; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [163686]

Mr. MacShane: The information is as follows.

Outcome of the 22 March 2004 General Affairs and External Relations Council

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary represented the UK at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in Brussels on 22 March 2004.

Conclusions were agreed on the strategic partnership for the Middle East, the assassination of Sheikh Yassin, Iran, Western Balkans, UN Commission on Human Rights, Afghanistan, EU military rapid response, EU ACP partnership—water facility, and protection of EU seafarers in third countries—The Tasman Spirit.

General Affairs Session

Progress of work in other Council configurations

The Council took note of a progress report from the Presidency on work under way in the Council's other configurations (Economic and Financial Affairs; Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs; Competitiveness; Environment; and Education, Youth and Culture).

Preparation for the spring European Council

The GAERC finalised an annotated draft agenda and draft conclusions prepared by the Presidency for the 25–26 March European Council in Brussels.

The European Council will examine a package of measures presented by the Presidency with the aim of giving a renewed impulse to efforts to combat terrorism following the 11 March terrorist attacks in Madrid. It will review the international situation and assess the prospects for progress in the Intergovernmental Conference on the draft EU Constitutional Treaty. The European Council is also expected to agree on the procedure to be followed for preparation of the EU's financial perspective for 2007–13 and (as is customary at spring councils) it will pursue work on the structural reform strategy that it laid down at Lisbon in March 2000.

Combating terrorism

The GAERC examined a package of measures (prepared by a 19 March Justice and Home Affairs Council) aimed at giving a renewed impulse to efforts to combat terrorism following the 11 March terrorist attacks in Madrid. The GAERC agreed to forward the measures to the European Council for approval.

External relations session

Western Balkans

The Council discussed Kosovo following recent events in the region and adopted Conclusions calling for an immediate and definitive end to the violence and condemning all acts of ethnically motivated violence. There were also Conclusions on Serbia and Montenegro, where the Council expressed readiness to co-operate with the newly formed Government but made clear that further progress towards European Integration is contingent on concrete action to implement political arid economic reforms. And there were short Conclusions on Macedonia's presentation of its application to join the EU.

ASEM

The Council took stock of preparations for the 17–18 April Asia-Europe Foreign Ministers Meeting (ASEM) at Kildare. It examined how to approach the issue of Burma's request to participate at the fifth ASEM summit at Hanoi on 8–9 October. The Presidency will continue consultations in order to find a solution on this issue.

Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East

The Council welcomed the Presidency's interim report on the Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East and looked forward to the June European Council when it will be able to consider the final article.

Short conclusions condemning the killing of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin were also adopted.

Iran

Conclusions were adopted on the Iranian nuclear programme in light of the 8–13 March meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors. The Conclusions called on Iran to comply fully with the provisions set out in 13 March Board of Governors' resolution and welcomed Iran's decision to extend the scope of its suspension of enrichment-related and reprocessing activities.

AOB: Russia

The Council had a brief discussion on the extension of the EU-Russia Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) to the new EU member states. The GAERC noted that contacts were ongoing to ensure that the extension was in place by 1 May.

Land Mines

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent steps his Department has taken to promote the Convention on the Prohibition on the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines. [163208]

Mr. Rammell: We are committed to promoting the Convention in the lead up to its first Review Conference in Nairobi at the end of this year. Following a comprehensive lobbying campaign of those states not party to the Convention in 2003, Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials will be actively participating in several regional seminars and workshops aimed at promoting the Convention and increasing the number of States Parties. They include events in Vienna, Tokyo and Vilnius.

We also participate in the informal intersessional meetings of the Convention and are members of both the Universalisation and Mobilisation Contact Groups. A UK official is Chair of the Sponsorship Programme in Geneva, which is vital in facilitating the attendance of heavily mine-affected countries to these meetings.

In addition to mine action funding provided by the Department for International Development, we have provided donations to the Convention's International Support Unit based in Geneva and to Landmine Monitor, an annual international publication produced by the International Campaign To Ban Landmines.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with countries which are not signatories to the Ottawa Convention about their signing up to the Convention. [163404]

Mr. Rammell: The Government considers that the best way of combating the production, use, stockpiling or transfer of anti-personnel landmines is to persuade as many countries as possible to sign the Ottawa Convention. The United Kingdom was among the first states to ratify the Convention and we continue to urge others to do the same. During 2003 we undertook, through our diplomatic missions, a comprehensive lobbying exercise of those states not party to the Convention, urging their ratification or accession at the earliest opportunity. This exercise was part of our activities in the Ottawa Convention's Universalisation Contact Group. We have built on this exercise in 2004 with a more targeted approach and hope to use the various regional events being held in the run up to the Nairobi Review Conference to encourage non-States Parties to sign the Convention.

Council of Europe

Mr. David Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's assessment is of progress made by the Russian Federation in meeting the commitments and obligations it entered into upon accession to the Council of Europe; what his Department's assessment is of areas on which further progress should be made; and if he will make a statement. [163220]

Mr. Rammell: The latest Council of Europe (CoE) Resolution on Russian implementation (1277 of 23 April 2002) acknowledges that progress has been made in many areas, for example, judicial reform, the transfer of pre-trial detention centres to the Ministry of Justice and adoption of the Law on the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights. Progress in other spheres such as the moratorium on the use of the death penalty is welcome, but it remains to be abolished formally and implementation is thus incomplete. The situation has however deteriorated in some areas. In particular, in the level of media freedom and the effect of the State controlled media on the conduct of free and fair elections. I refer the hon. Member to the declaration published by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the Presidential elections in Russia on 17 March 2004.

We also remain seriously concerned over the situation in Chechnya. The prosecution of those responsible for human rights violations remains limited to a few key cases, while the majority of reported abuses go uninvestigated. There continue to be reports of widespread human rights abuses, including rising numbers of 'disappearances', by federal forces and local militias in Chechnya.

Most legal instruments pertaining to the accession of Russia to the CoE have been signed and ratified. However, Protocol 6 to the European Convention on Human Rights, and The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages have been signed but not ratified. Furthermore, The European Social Charter and The Convention on Transfer of Sentenced Persons have not yet been signed.

We continue to support the CoE in remaining engaged with Russia and to encourage Russia to implement its commitments.

PRIME MINISTER

Environmental Matters

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister on what date he next intends to give a speech on environmental matters. [164038]

The Prime Minister: I regularly give speeches on a wide range of domestic and international issues, which cover environmental issues. My forthcoming speaking engagements are announced at the appropriate time.

Mr. Kenneth Norden

Bob Spink: To ask the Prime Minister if he will meet Mr. Kenneth Norden to discuss the loss of his final salary pension scheme. [163594]

The Prime Minister: I have asked my hon. Friend the Minister for Pensions to meet the hon. Gentleman's constituent about this matter on my behalf.

Parliamentary Questions

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister how many, and what percentage of Written Parliamentary Questions tabled to him in 2003 he answered by reference to an earlier Parliamentary Answer. [164037]

The Prime Minister: This information is not held in the format requested. However, it is a matter of public record and can be found in the *Official Report*.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Environmentally Sustainable Procurement

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in what ways environmentally sustainable procurement strategies within the Department have driven innovation in the design and supply of products. [159149]

Maria Eagle: In September 2003, a report signalled how recommendations from the inter-departmental Sustainable Procurement Group (SPG) would be taken forward. Following this DWP introduced revised policy guidance that made it official departmental policy to purchase sustainable goods and services wherever possible.

Guidance is currently being revised to include comprehensive assistance for the Department's procurement officials to achieve this objective. Additionally governance controls for Departmental projects and programmes, which can include major procurement exercises, require that sustainability issues are considered within business cases.

We are now working to include sustainability within several major contracts that are shortly to be renewed as well as reviewing existing contracts for their sustainability impacts. Further work on sustainable procurement and innovation is in hand but it is too early to assess what impact these provisions have had on innovation in the design and supply of products. Information on progress in this area will be included within the annual DWP Sustainable Development Report, which is published in the autumn.

European Year of Disabled People

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what funding his Department granted to the European Year of Disabled People National Co-ordinating Chamber in each year since 2002; [163699]

(2) what plans the European Year of Disabled People National Co-ordinating Chamber has made for its employees in 2004; and if he will make a statement; [163700]

(3) how many people are employed by the European Year of Disabled People National Co-ordinating Chamber. [163701]

Maria Eagle: The UK National Co-ordinating Committee was established in January 2002 to develop, agree, implement, and oversee a programme of activity for the European Year of Disabled People 2003. It has been responsible for making recommendations to Ministers on the use of the £1.5 million allocated in 2002 by the Department for Work and Pensions and the European Commission to support EYDP activities. It comprises 16 representatives of key national disability organisations and organisations in the public and private sectors. It has met regularly since January 2002 and will be disbanded on 30 June 2004 when the EYDP officially comes to an end. It has no employees. Secretariat services have been provided by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Executive Agency Staff

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many full-time equivalent jobs there were in his Department and its executive agencies, and prior to 2001 with the Department of Social Security and its agencies, and those agencies which transferred to his Department in 2001, in each year since 1997. [162975]

Maria Eagle: Information is not available on the number of full time equivalent jobs in the Department for Work and Pensions as the numbers of historical vacancies at any given time is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The number of full time equivalent permanent and temporary staff employed in the Department for Work and Pensions, and the relevant predecessor organisations, for each year since 1997 is shown in the table.

	Department of Social Security	*The Employment Service*	*Total*	*Department for Work and Pensions*
31 March 1997	98,194	31,550	129,744	—
31 March 1998	93,635	30,796	124,431	—
31 March 1999	95,048	32,675	127,723	—
31 March 2000	87,261	32,620	119,881	—
31 March 2001	85,423	34,110	119,531	—
31 March 2002	—	—	—	126,906
31 March 2003	—	—	—	130,007

Notes:

1. Figures are on a whole time equivalent (rounded) and include temporary staff.
2. Figures are point in time at the dates quoted.
3. Figures are consistent with Cabinet Office definitions other than that staff on paid maternity leave are included in the figures above.
4. The reduction in the Department of Social Security staffing in 1999–2000 takes account of the transfer of the Contributions Agency and Working Families Tax Credits to the Inland Revenue.
5. The reduction in staffing in 2000–01 takes account of the outsourcing of the Information Technology Services Agency.

Jobcentre Plus (Staff with Disabilities)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female advisers working for Jobcentre Plus in (i) 2002 and (ii) 2003 had a disability, broken down by disability type. [163694]

Maria Eagle: Information on numbers of staff in the Department for Work and Pensions is not held by job type.

Pension Credit

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make it his policy to publish in advance a schedule of publication dates for pension credit monthly progress reports; and if he will make a statement on the method of release of these reports to hon. Members. [164047]

Malcolm Wicks: We have so far published progress reports on a monthly basis, starting on 14 October 2003. Publication dates for future reports have not yet been agreed. The precise timing, frequency and format of the reports to Parliament will be reviewed in the context of Agency Business Plans for the next operational year. The method of release of reports has been to place them in the House of Commons Library and to make copies available for hon. Members in the Vote Office. More detailed information is also frequently provided to hon. Members in reply to written and oral Questions.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his answer of 17 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 317–8W, on pension credit, if he will break down the changes of circumstances reported by customers by *(a)* category of change and *(b)* age group of claimant. [164049]

Malcolm Wicks: It is not possible to break the information down in the way requested.

Pensions

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of *(a)* women and *(b)* men are members of private (i) occupational and (ii) personal pension schemes, broken down by ethnic group. [163767]

Malcolm Wicks: The breakdown of those of working age contributing to a private pension by ethnic grouping is given in the table.

Membership of private pension schemes by gender within ethnic group category

Ethnic group	*Occupational*			*Personal*		
	Male	*Female*	*All*	*Male*	*Female*	*All*
White	35	33	34	17	9	13
Mixed	30	24	26-	11	9	10
Indian	28	23	26	12	7	10
Pakistani and Bangladeshi	9	8	9	4	1	2
Any other Asian/Asian British background	17	22	19	8	6	7
Black or Black British	25	28	27	5	4	5
Total	34	32	33	16	8	12

Notes:
1. All figures are estimates derived from the Family Resources Survey (FRS) 2002–03, the latest year for which data are available. The coverage of the survey is the UK.
2. Percentages are based on relevant ethnic group respondent population from the Family Resources Survey. Some estimates are based on small sample numbers.
3. Membership relates to those who are currently contributing to a private pension scheme or whose employer is currently contributing.
4. Stakeholder pensions are included as personal pensions.
5. Working age is ages 20–59 for women and 20–64 for men.

Source:
Family Resources Survey 2002–03.

Civil Service

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what consultation he has conducted with *(a)* staff, *(b)* unions, *(c)* management and *(d)* senior management within his Department on planned redundancies and redeployment of staff over the next four years; whether he plans to have further discussions with these groups on this matter; and if he will make a statement. [163296]

Maria Eagle: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State wrote, jointly with the Permanent Head of the Department, to all staff and managers immediately following the Budget announcement to explain the context and rationale for the decision to reduce staff numbers.

Shortly after the announcement he met with the General Secretary and other officials of Public and Commercial Services Union.

Officials in the Department meet regularly with the trade unions to discuss workforce management issues and these meetings will continue as detailed plans are now developed.

Winter Fuel Allowance

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many senior citizens in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each Greater London borough are eligible for the winter fuel allowance; and what this represents as a percentage of the total number of senior citizens. [163763]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of people in Greater London and each Greater London Local Authority who have received a winter fuel payment so far is in the table. We are not able to say how many people were ineligible for this winter's payment.

Region/Local authority	*Payments made in 2003–04*
Greater London	1,071,295
Camden	25,470
City of London	1,055
Hackney	21,505
Hammersmith and Fulham	19,470
Haringey	26,670
Islington	22,090
Kensington and Chelsea	18,670
Lambeth	29,575
Lewisham	33,720
Newham	26,460
Southwark	28,650
Tower Hamlets	21,625
Wandsworth	32,950
Westminster	25,560
Barking and Dagenham	26,685
Barnet	52,875
Bexley	43,560
Brent	36,540
Bromley	61,385
Croydon	52,860
Ealing	42,350
Enfield	45,810
Greenwich	32,475
Harrow	37,215
Havering	49,070
Hillingdon	41,710
Hounslow	31,090
Kingston upon Thames	23,650

Region/Local authority	Payments made in 2003–04
Merton	27,945
Redbridge	39,905
Richmond upon Thames	28,780
Sutton	32,145
Waltham Forest	31,770

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.
2. Please note that these figures for 2003–04 refer only to the main payment run i.e. they do not include the late payment run figures. We estimate that there are approximately 100,000 people in Great Britain paid via late payment runs (0.8 per cent. of all payments). However, since late payment runs are mainly in respect of non-system cases whose claim had not been received by Qualifying Week, they are heavily skewed towards men aged 60.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 samples

HEALTH

Agency Staff

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on agency fees by *(a)* North West London Strategic Health authority, *(b)* North West London Hospitals NHS Trust and *(c)* Brent Primary Care Trust in each year since 1997. [149899]

Mr. Hutton: The national health service does not separately record the cost of employing agency staff. The figures in the tables include total cost to the NHS of staff not directly employed by NHS bodies.

The tables show total non-NHS staff expenditure for NHS trusts, health authorities and a primary care trust in the North West London area.

Total non-NHS Staff Expenditure by (a) North West London Strategic Health Authority, (b) North West London Hospitals NHS Trust and (c) Brent Primary Care Trust—1997–98 to 2002–03

		£
1997–98		
(a)	Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster HA	59,189
	Brent and Harrow HA	128,656
	Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow HA	47,551
	Hillingdon HA	446,660
	Total	682,056
(b)	Central Middlesex Hospital NHS Trust	1,573,846
	Northwick Park and St. Mark's NHS Trust	2,209,415
	Total	3,783,261
1998–99		
(a)	Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster HA	138,150
	Brent and Harrow HA	152,240
	Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow HA	61,404
	Hillingdon HA	396,346
	Total	748,140
(b)	Central Middlesex Hospital NHS Trust	2,043,735
	Northwick Park and St. Mark's NHS Trust	2,722,176
	Total	4,765,911
1999–2000		
(a)	Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster HA	403,448
	Brent and Harrow HA	175,878
	Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow HA	155,052
	Hillingdon HA	1,724,175
	Total	2,458,553
(b)	North West London Hospitals NHS Trust	7,376,634

Total non-NHS Staff Expenditure by (a) North West London Strategic Health Authority, (b) North West London Hospitals NHS Trust and (c) Brent Primary Care Trust—1997–98 to 2002–03

		£
2000–01		
(a)	Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster HA	681,745
	Brent and Harrow HA	222,065
	Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow HA	224,825
	Hillingdon HA	2,335,535
	Total	3,464,170
(b)	North West London Hospitals NHS Trust	7,634,467
2001–02		
(a)	Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster HA	2,201,121
	Brent and Harrow HA	334,538
	Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow HA	294,446
	Hillingdon HA	11,101
	Total	2,841,206
(b)	North West London Hospitals NHS Trust	9,784,744
2002–03[1]		
(a)	North West London Strategic Health Authority	267,650
(b)	North West London Hospitals NHS Trust	11,674,257
(c)	Brent Teaching PCT	5,826,724

[1] All 2002–03 data are provisional.

Notes:

1. The North West London Strategic Health Authority was established in 2002–03. Prior to this, a combination of four health authorities (Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster HA, Brent and Harrow HA, Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow HA and Hillingdon HA) serviced the North West London area.
2. In 1999–2000, the North West London Hospitals NHS Trust was established by the merger of two NHS Trusts (Central Middlesex Hospitals NHS Trust and Northwick Park and St. Mark's NHS Trust).
3. Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust was established in 2002–03.

Sources:

Annual financial returns of Health Authorities 1997–98 to 2001–02.

Annual financial returns of NHS Trusts 1997–98 to 2002–03.

Annual financial returns of Primary Care Trusts 2002–03.

Annual financial returns of Strategic Health Authorities 2002–03.

Bedfordshire Health Authority

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which health body has the authority to remove a caution registered against residential property in respect of Bedfordshire Health Authority's interest in relation to a loan required to complete the original purchase of that property. [157601]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 1 March 2004]*: The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority has the authority to have a caution removed from a property that it has an interest in.

Cancer Services

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many and what percentage of women in Crosby with suspected breast cancer saw a specialist within two weeks in each of the last five years; [160386]

(2) how many and what percentage of suspected cancer patients in Crosby saw an NHS consultant within two weeks in each of the last seven years. [160393]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not collected on a constituency basis but by national health service trust. A copy has been placed in the Library. The information is also available at http://www.performance.doh.gov.uk/cancerwaits/index.html

"Choosing Health"

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the evidence on which the finding is based that premature death from *(a)* cancer has reduced by 10 per cent. and *(b)* coronary heart disease has reduced by 23 per cent. since 1997, as set out in the foreword to the consultation document Choosing Health. [160660]

Miss Melanie Johnson: "Our Healthier Nation", the Government's overall health strategy for England, sets out targets to reduce the death rates from cancer by at least 20 per cent., and all circulatory diseases by at least 40 per cent., in people aged under 75 years by 2010. Progress in respect of these targets are measured against the baseline of the average of the three years 1995, 1996 and 1997.

The targets are monitored using mortality statistics from death registrations provided by the Office for National Statistics. The mortality rates are subsequently calculated by the Department of Health. Mortality rates are age standardised to allow for changes in the age structure of the population (using the European standard population as defined by the World Health Organisation).

The following tables show the three year average mortality rates for all cancers and all circulatory diseases since the baseline figure was established.

All cancers (Malignant Neoplasms) (ICD10 C00-C97)

Persons—aged under 75 years

England	*3 year average mortality rate*
1995–96–97 (Baseline)	141.4
1996–97–98	138.7
1997–98–99	135.1
1998–99–2000	132.3
1999–2000–01	129.1
2000–01–02	126.8
Percentage change in rate since baseline	-10.3

Source:

Office for National Statistics (European age standardised mortality rates per 100,000 population from death registrations, calculations by Department of Health).

All circulatory diseases (ICD10 100–199)

Persons—aged under 75 years

England	*3 year average mortality rate*
1995–96–97 (Baseline)	141.5
1996–97–98	135.7
1997–98–99	128.7
1998–99–2000	122.0
1999–2000–01	114.8
2000–01–02	108.5
Percentage change in rate since baseline	-23.4

Source:

Office for National Statistics (European age standardised mortality rates per 100,000 population from death registrations, calculations by Department of Health).

Coronary Angiograms

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of a coronary angiogram was in each NHS hospital trust in England in the latest period for which figures are available. [150731]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Free Health Care

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what checks are carried out by *(a)* general practitioners and *(b)* hospitals to establish that patients from abroad are entitled to health care free at the point of delivery. [155796]

Mr. Hutton: General practices need to check details of an individual's residence or previous registration before deciding whether to accept the person as a registered patient, either on a permanent or temporary basis. This is set out in regulations and guidance. For hospital services, regulations require the national health service trust providing treatment to make

> "such enquiries as it is satisfied are reasonable in all the circumstances, including the state of health of the overseas visitor"

to determine a patient's chargeable status. Guidance makes clear that all patients should be asked a baseline residency question, but it is for individual trusts to decide how far it is reasonable to go in following up on the response.

General Practitioners

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* nurses and *(b)* general practitioners are in training in (i) each London borough, (ii) Greater London and (iii) England; and what the figures were in 1997. [162366]

Mr. Hutton: The available information on the number of general practitioner registrars and student nursing populations is shown in the table. Student nursing population information by strategic health authority is only available for 2001–02 and from 1998–99 for the Greater London area.

GP registrars and nursing course student populations by strategic health authority (SHA) and primary care trust (PCT) for London and England

		Headcount GP Registrars[1]		Whole-time equivalents Student nurse population[2]	
		1997	2003	1998–99	2001–02
England		1,343	2,235	45,668	51,713
Of which:					
London		208	348	9,081	12,200
Of which:					
Q04	North West London SHA	45	58	n/a	2,672
5AT	Hillingdon PCT	n/a	8	n/a	n/a
5H1	Hammersmith and Fulham PCT	n/a	2	n/a	n/a
5HX	Ealing PCT	n/a	8	n/a	n/a
5HY	Hounslow PCT	n/a	4	n/a	n/a
5K5	Brent PCT	n/a	17	n/a	n/a
5K6	5K6 Harrow PCT	n/a	8		n/a
5LA	Kensington and Chelsea PCT	n/a	10	n/a	n/a
5LC	Westminster PCT	n/a	1	n/a	n/a
QO5	North Central London SHA	44	74	n/a	2,803
5A9	Barnet PCT	n/a	15	n/a	n/a
5C1	Enfield PCT	n/a	6	n/a	n/a
5C9	Haringey PCT	n/a	14	n/a	n/a
5K7	Camden PCT	n/a	30	n/a	n/a
5K8	Islington PCT	n/a	9	n/a	n/a
QO6	North East London SHA	39	71	n/a	3,015
5A4	Havering PCT	n/a	12	n/a	n/a
5C2	Barking and Dagenham PCT	n/a	5	n/a	n/a
5C3	City and Hackney PCT	n/a	17	n/a	n/a
5C4	Tower Hamlets PCT	n/a	16	n/a	n/a
5C5	Newham PCT	n/a	8	n/a	n/a
5NC	Waltham Forest PCT	n/a	13	n/a	n/a
QO7	South East London SHA	35	51	n/a	2,424
5A7	Bromley PCT	n/a	13	n/a	n/a
5A8	Greenwich PCT	n/a	8	n/a	n/a
5AX	Bexley PCT	n/a	5	n/a	n/a
5LD	Lambeth PCT	n/a	11	n/a	n/a
5LE	Southwark PCT	n/a	6	n/a	n/a
5LF	Lewisham PCT	n/a	8	n/a	n/a
Q08	South West London SHA	45	94	n/a	1,286
5A5	Kingston PCT	n/a	16	n/a	n/a
5K9	Croydon PCT	n/a	24	n/a	n/a
5LG	Wandsworth PCT	n/a	15	n/a	n/a
5M6	Richmond and Twickenham PCT	n/a	19	n/a	n/a
5M7	Sutton and Merton PCT	n/a	20	n/a	n/a

n/a = Not applicable.
[1] Figures as at 30 September each year.
[2] Figures for the financial year.
Source:
Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners he estimates over-prescribe *(a)* Seroxat and *(b)* other selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors. [162564]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available in requested format.

It is not possible to estimate the numbers of general practitioners prescribing above the recommended doses.

Hormone Replacement Therapy

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the link between hormone replacement therapy and an increased risk of *(a)* stroke and *(b)* heart disease; and if he will make a statement. [161927]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) and its expert working group on hormone replacement therapy (HRT) has kept the safety of HRT under constant review and provided targeted advice to women and health professionals in response to important new evidence as it has emerged.

Despite some weak observational evidence suggesting a possible benefit, HRT has never been licensed for the prevention of heart disease in the United Kingdom. In 2002, two large studies in the United States provided important new clinical trial information about the effect of combined oestrogen plus progestogen HRT on the risk of heart disease in women with and without a pre-existing heart condition. One of these studies further demonstrated an effect of HRT on the risk of stroke. Immediately upon publication of this study, the CSM informed health professionals and women that HRT had not been proven to be beneficial in preventing coronary heart disease and may in fact result in a small

increase in the risk in the first year of use. The CSM also advised that this type of HRT causes a small increase in the risk of stroke.

Clear warnings about the risk of heart disease and stroke in association with combined HRT use have been agreed throughout Europe and are being included in the summary of product characteristics for health professionals and the patient information leaflet that accompanies each pack of medicine.

In addition, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has placed a comprehensive review of the risks (including heart disease and stroke) associated with HRT use on its website. Detailed information has also been published in the safety bulletins issued by the MHRA and the Chief Medical Officer, which are available on their respective websites.

The CSM's expert working group on HRT has been informed that the oestrogen-only arm of the US Women's Health Initiative trial has now found that the risk of stroke in users of this HRT preparation is increased similarly to combined HRT. These findings have not yet been published, but will be urgently considered by the CSM and its expert working group on HRT as soon as they are available. When their review is complete, the current product information will be updated as necessary and women and health care professionals will be clearly informed of the new advice.

The CSM advises that for the alleviation of menopausal symptoms, health professionals should prescribe the lowest effective dose of HRT for the shortest possible time and perform regular health checks on HRT users, including a reassessment of the need to continue HRT on an annual basis. The CSM also advises that for the prevention of osteoporosis, HRT should only be used by women who are intolerant of, or contraindicated for, other medicines approved for this purpose.

IT

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consultation has been undertaken with healthcare professionals before the awarding of contracts under the National Programme for Information Technology; and if he will make a statement. [162186]

Mr. Hutton: Extensive consultation has taken place with clinical representative groups, including the professional Royal Colleges, the General Medical Council, and the British Medical Council, all of whom have provided valuable input. As well as the national professional bodies and groups, the national programme for information technology (NPfIT) team has engaged closely with expert primary care practitioners, including practising general practitioners, who are there to represent and feedback issues with their professional colleagues.

The National Clinical Advisory Board has ensured that the wide-ranging clinical needs and requirements are reflected in the design of the NPfIT solutions and integrated into the ongoing plans of the programme. There are currently 29 full members and 12 working groups covering a variety of care settings, from cancer care to out of hours care.

The NPfIT to date has hosted around 400 local events, engaging managers, clinicians, allied health professionals and IT staff. Over 21,000 individuals have been involved. We are undertaking a concerted effort to ensure as many people as possible are now engaged on the local plans to prepare for phased roll out after April 2004.

Seroxat

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the data on which the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency based its statement of 11 March on dosage levels of Seroxat was first made available to the regulator. [162491]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The advice issued by the Committee for the Safety of Medicines (CSM) on 11 March 2004 followed a re-evaluation of the original dose finding studies carried out for the licensing of paroxetine in 1990. This forms part of the ongoing in-depth review of the safety of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), including paroxetine (Seroxat), by the CSM's expert working group on the safety of SSRIs.

The expert group initially reviewed one of the dose finding studies for paroxetine in October 2003. On the advice of the expert group, the manufacturer was then asked to provide data to justify the current dosing recommendations for all indications as part of the European review of the risks and benefits of paroxetine. The expert group reviewed all the information available at its meeting on 27 February 2004.

On 10 March 2004, the CSM endorsed the advice of its expert group and advised that public communication was necessary on the basis of the re-evaluation of clinical trial data and the evidence of prescribing of paroxetine outside of the recommendations in the summary of product characteristics, in particular the use of starting doses above 20 mg in the treatment of depression.

Mental Health Services

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on primary care trust provision of mental health services. [163222]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Primary care trusts have a crucial role to play in both the commissioning and provision of mental health services. We know that up to one in four primary care consultations concerns a mental health problem and many people receive all their mental health care and treatment from their general practitioner.

In recognition of the importance of primary mental health care, the National Service Framework for Mental Health (1999) set two standards to deliver better services and to ensure the provision of consistent advice and help for people with mental health needs in primary care.

The NHS Plan (2000) set targets to put in place 1,000 graduate primary care mental health workers and 500 new community mental health staff by December 2004. The National Institute for Mental Health in England has established a work programme on primary care mental health.

These developments are complemented with investment in improving GP premises and increasing the number of GP registrars. Last year, the NHS Plan target to put in place 550 GP registrars by March 2004 was met more than nine months early and we now have 637 more GP registrars in post than in 1999.

Obesity

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans the Government has to designate a single body to co-ordinate work across government in tackling obesity. [163600]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department takes the lead on work to tackle obesity. However, the Department cannot tackle obesity alone. Cross-governmental working is essential. The Government launched their major consultation on public health this month. The Public Health White Paper will provide the overarching framework to improve public health and will present real opportunities to progress work on the prevention and management of overweight and obesity.

The consultation will enable a wide range of stakeholders to contribute to the debate on overweight and obesity. This will build on the work already started through the food and health action plan and the activity co-ordination team. The Government will draw up their White Paper in the light of the consultation.

York District Hospital

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when building work on the children's assessment and treatment area at York District Hospital was completed. [157522]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This facility was completed at the time the modernised accident and emergency department at York District Hospital was brought into use in February 2001.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the area set aside for the children's assessment and treatment area at York District Hospital is currently being used for. [157524]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This area is not being used at the present time.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects the observation beds in the accident and emergency unit at York District Hospital to be used; for what reason they were built; and at what cost. [157525]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The observation bed area is now being used for the treatment of patients with minor injuries attending the accident and emergency department, on a three month pilot basis.

This facility was built as part of the overall accident and emergency department modernisation scheme, to allow scope for future service development.

The total cost of the accident and emergency modernisation scheme was £2.16 million.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 29 March 2004

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Departmental Buildings

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Leader of the House what *(a)* renovation and *(b)* maintenance projects on buildings (i) owned and (ii) rented by his office were undertaken in each of the last five years; and what the associated costs were of each. [163953]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons was established in June 2003 and does not own or rent building space.

The Privy Council Office provides the office with accommodation at 2 Carlton Gardens, and it is responsible for all renovation and maintenance projects.

Temporary Staff

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Leader of the House (1) how many staff his Office employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Office paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available; [158253]

(2) if he will list the employment agencies which his office has used to supply temporary staff in each financial year since 1996–97 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [163811]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons was established in June 2003 and the information is set out in the list below.

Staff are employed through employment agencies on a temporary basis to cover vacancies during recruitment.

Year—2003–04

Number—2

Percentage—13

Amount—£9,561.30

The agencies used were Adecco (UK) Limited and Josephine Sammons Ltd.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Broadband

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment her Department has made of the effect of fees charged for the migration of broadband customers on *(a)* competitiveness in telecommunications and *(b)* broadband take-up. [162057]

Mr. Timms: According to Oftel's "International benchmarking study of Internet access (dial-up and broadband)" for October 2003, the percentage growth in broadband subscriber numbers in the UK remains strong. The UK market is more competitive in terms of service providers and infrastructure competition than either France or Germany. Although take-up in the UK is behind other countries benchmarked, this is at least partly explained by the later launch date of broadband in the UK and the availability of unmetered services.

These factors along with increasingly competitive broadband prices, present a positive picture for broadband development in the UK and in the six months prior to the study, the UK had reached penetration levels similar to France and was catching up on Germany.

In December 2003, Oftel and the incoming Communications Regulator Ofcom agreed a joint draft decision on the regulation of the UK's wholesale broadband access market, which concluded regulatory obligations remained necessary to ensure fair and effective competition. UK individuals and organisations with an interest in the wholesale broadband market were given until 6 February to comment. The EU is also considering the proposals.

Oftel and Ofcom also found that BT should be required to provide its Datastream products on a retail minus basis to allow a sufficient margin between the price it charges for its IPStream products and the price charged for the Datastream products. The actual retail minus margin will be set following consultation in the first quarter of 2004.

Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many cases of computer misuse there were in her Department in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003, broken down by category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [163247]

Ms Hewitt: In 2003 there were four cases of computer misuse notified to the DTI Human Resources and Change Management Conduct and Discipline Team. Three of these cases involved the distribution of inappropriate material and the fourth the accessing of inappropriate internet sites. Disciplinary action was taken in all four cases.

Figures for 1997 are not available. 1997 information is not maintained as this is outside the normal retention period for disciplinary cases.

House Sharers

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will give the same rights to house-sharers not living as a couple as is proposed for same-sex couples in the Civil Partnerships Bill. [163519]

Jacqui Smith: The Government will make clear its detailed proposals on introduction of the forthcoming Civil Partnership Bill. The rights of house-sharers are a separate issue to those of same-sex couples who are unable to marry and there are currently no plans for changes to the law in that area.

Regional Funding

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding has been allocated to *(a)* European regional development fund areas, *(b)* Frameworks for Regional Employment and Skills Action, *(c)* Phoenix Fund and *(d)* regional centres for manufacturing excellence and *(e)* warm zones in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06 and (iii) total. [163722]

Ms Hewitt: In accordance with the Spending Review 2002 settlement the Government plan to spend:

£ million

	(a) European Regional Development Fund - ERDF (DTI-related expenditure cover)	*(c) Phoenix Fund*	*(d) Regional centres for manufacturing excellence*
2004–05	186.3	25	2.8
2005–06	176.4	25	0
Total	362.7	50	2.8

(b) In relation to Frameworks for Regional Employment and Skills Action, which is the responsibility of DfES: these are the way in which key regional partners led by the RDA develop and deliver an agreed plan to address skills and employment needs of employers and individuals within the region. The resources which partners bring to the table in respect of agreed priorities in the FRESA will vary from region to region.

(e) Warm zones: no DTI funding has been allocated to Warm Zones in 2004–05 or 2005–06.

Secondments

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte and Touche, *(c)* Ernst and Young and *(d)* KPMG have made to her Department since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from her Department have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [156927]

Ms Hewitt: Secondments are part of the Interchange Initiative which promotes the exchange of people and good practice between the Civil Service and other organisations. Before an Interchange can occur all parties must be satisfied that no conflict of interest arises.

Inward Secondments

There have been three secondees from *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, two from *(b)* Deloitte and Touche, five from *(c)* Ernst and Young and one from *(d)* KPMG to the Department since 2001.

The following table shows the period of each secondment and the position of each secondee.

Company	*Start date*	*End date*	*Position*
PricewaterhouseCoopers	25 March 2002	31 March 2004	Deputy Director in UK Trade and Investment (Entrepreneurial Inward Investment)
PricewaterhouseCoopers	4 November 2002	29 October 2004	Assistant Director in Industrial Development Unit
PricewaterhouseCoopers	15 June 1999	9 May 2001	Investigator in Company Law and Investigations
Deloitte and Touche	2 September 2002	31 July 2003	Director in Business Relations
Deloitte and Touche	26 July 2000	31 August 2001	Assistant Director in Nuclear Industries Directorate
Ernst and Young	3 February 2003	2 February 2005	Assistant Director in UK T and I
Ernst and Young	14 January 2004	13 January 2006	Assistant Director in Industrial Development Unit
Ernst and Young	15 April 2002	16 April 2004	Deputy Director in Industrial Development Unit
Ernst and Young	2 September 2002	1 September 2004	Deputy Director in Industrial Development Unit
Ernst and Young	15 April 2002	21 March 2004	Director, Internal Audit
KPMG	16 July 2001	1 March 2002	Manager in Engineering Industries Directorate

Outward secondments

There have been no secondments of DTI staff to *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte and Touche, *(c)* Ernst and Young and *(d)* KPMG since 2001.

DEFENCE

Sea Cadet Corps

22. **Mr. Ivan Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what formal relationship there is between the Royal Navy and the Sea Cadet Corps. [163794]

Mr. Caplin: The Royal Navy's formal relationship with the Sea Cadet Corps is set out in a Memorandum of Understanding between its two principal sponsors, the Ministry of Defence and the Sea Cadet Association.

Discussions are under way on this memorandum as it is due for review in July this year.

Defence Industrial Policy

23. **Mr. Joyce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps his Department is taking to involve trade unions in defence industrial policy. [163795]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence regularly exchanges views with trade unionists on a range of defence industrial issues. They have welcomed the Defence Industrial Policy that we published in October 2002.

Aircraft Carriers

24. **Richard Ottaway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the proposed new aircraft carriers to enter service. [163796]

Mr. Ingram: Our target in-service dates for the two new carriers remain as 2012 and 2015. Estimates for their delivery are being developed progressively during the remainder of the Assessment Phase, taking account

of the maturing carrier design. Expected in-service dates will be confirmed when we agree the contracting arrangements for Demonstration and Manufacture.

Territorial Army

25. **Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Territorial Army soldiers are deployed in *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Kosovo; and how many of them have been compulsorily mobilised. [163797]

Mr. Caplin: There are currently some 970 Territorial Army personnel serving in Iraq and 10 in Kosovo who have been compulsorily mobilised. In addition, there are five TA personnel serving in Kosovo who have not.

Departmental Officials

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which former officials of the Department have asked for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG. [156898]

Mr. Caplin: The Rules on Acceptance of Outside Appointments by Crown Servants (the "Business Appointment Rules"), which are set out in section 4.3 of the Civil Service Management Code, require MOD officials within two years of leaving to obtain permission, in the circumstances defined in paragraph 7 of the rules, before taking up new employment.

It is not our policy to discuss individual applications. Only the most senior officials, whose applications are considered by the Prime Ministers' Advisory Committee on Business Appointments, are required to inform their former Department when they take up such appointments. This information is published in the Committee's annual report.

Since 1 January 2001, four former MOD officials have applied for permission to join PricewaterhouseCoopers; two to join KPMG; and two to join Ernst & Young. All applications were approved unconditionally. No applications have been received to join Deloitte & Touche.

Deployments (Germany)

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to relocate an infantry brigade from Germany to the United Kingdom. [163770]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* There are no infantry brigades stationed in Germany and we have no plans to change our force levels there.

Iraq

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the security situation in Iraq. [163775]

Mr. Hoon: The security situation in Iraq remains difficult, with crime a particular problem. The vast majority of terrorist attacks against Iraqi and Coalition security forces and civilians continue to occur to the North and West of Baghdad. Much of the country is calm, however, and normal life is resuming without incident. Around 75,000 Iraqi police are now on duty and more are being trained.

I am sure the House would wish to join me in congratulating British forces for the courage and restraint they showed in calming the recent unrest in Basrah.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action has been taken in each of the cases where successful claims for compensation have been paid to Iraqis alleging injury by UK forces; and if he will make a statement. [148005]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers serving in Iraq have been treated for stress; and if he will make a statement. [162596]

Mr. Caplin: Stress may cause a wide-range of medical conditions. As at 25 March 2004, 120 members of the United Kingdom armed forces had been evacuated from Iraq for psychiatric reasons. We do not record centrally whether individual cases are stress-related.

Kilve Bend Range

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many objects were dropped by aircraft on the range at Kilve Bend in Somerset in the last five years. [161874]

Mr. Ingram: The range at Kilve Bend, part of the Lilstock Royal Navy Range, served until 1995 as a practice bombing range for fixed-wing aircraft using inert ordinance. It was redesignated as a helicopter gunnery range that year and nothing has been dropped by aircraft on the range since.

Kuwait

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what support his Department gives to the Humanitarian Operations Centre in Kuwait; and if he will make a statement. [157452]

Mr. Ingram: The UK currently fills one staff officer post in the Humanitarian Operations Centre and is in the process of filling a second.

Osama Bin Laden

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British troops are involved in the hunt for Osama Bin Laden; what progress has been made in the search; and if he will make a statement. [164384]

Mr. Hoon: The United Kingdom continues to support the objectives of Operation Enduring Freedom, the US-led coalition operation against international terrorism and its continuing search for the leadership of Al Qaida. All UK forces in the theatre are involved in helping to stabilise Afghanistan to ensure it does not again become a haven for terrorists.

RAF Stafford

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the radioactive items held at RAF Stafford, indicating in each case *(a)* the length of time held and *(b)* the purpose of holding them. [163972]

Mr. Caplin: It will take some time to collate the information requested.

I will, therefore write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Sanctuary Magazine

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much money was spent on *(a)* research, *(b)* staffing costs, *(c)* printing and publication, *(d)* distribution and *(e)* other costs for Sanctuary magazine No. 32, 2003; and how much was paid to DCCS Media. [163546]

Mr. Caplin: All research for Sanctuary magazine is carried out by MOD staff, for whom production of the publication is part of their normal duties. Consequently, there are no separate staffing or research costs. The printing and publication costs for the 2003 edition were some £27,000, with the distribution costing £1,500. All costs were met from the budget of the Defence Estates Agency, with no direct payment being made to DCCS media.

War Disablement Pensioners

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people in London are in receipt of a war disablement pension; and how many of those receive the war pensioners' mobility supplement. [163749]

Mr. Caplin: According to the Veterans Agency Computer System, as at 31 December 2003, there were 8,710 ongoing war disablement pensioners with a recorded address in the Government Office Region of London.

Of these, 820 were receiving the war pensioners' mobility supplement.

Please note that all figures are rounded to the nearest five.

PRIME MINISTER

Cabinet Committee on Relocation

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Prime Minister with reference to the recommendations of the Lyons Report, when a Cabinet Committee on relocation will be set up; who will chair it; and who its members will be. [164585]

The Prime Minister: I shall announce shortly the arrangements for following up this aspect of Sir Michael Lyons's report.

Employment Agencies

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the employment agencies which his office has used to supply temporary staff in each financial year since 1996–97 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [163808]

The Prime Minister: Since April 2000, my office has used four employment agencies to supply temporary staff to fill vacancies in IT, correspondence, secretarial and administrative support. These are Adecco, Excel Josephine Sammons Agency and Susan Hamilton Agency. Information for the years before 2000 is not held centrally.

Liberation of Rome (1944)

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to the answer from the Leader of the House to the hon. Member for New Forest, East on 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1673, on prime ministerial and Royal representation at the 60th anniversary commemoration of the liberation of Rome on 4 June, what action he proposes to take. [162080]

The Prime Minister: There are no plans for a Member of the Royal Family or me to attend the 60th anniversary commemoration of the liberation of Rome on 4 June. While we acknowledge this as a significant event in the course of the war, we understand that any ceremony is likely to be a Rome Municipality event rather than a State one. However, it is hoped that a Member of the Royal Family will represent Her Majesty at the commemoration event of the Battle of Monte Cassino in Italy in May.

Libya

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister if, during his forthcoming visit to Libya, he will discuss the future detention of Abdul Bassett al Megrahi. [163724]

The Prime Minister: I discussed a wide range of issues with Colonel Qadhafi including international and regional security issues and the Middle East Peace Process.

The terms under which Abdelbaset Al Megrahi is serving his prison sentence were briefly discussed.

Party Use of Government Buildings

Gregory Barker: To ask the Prime Minister how many Labour Party events have been held at *(a)* Number 10 and *(b)* Number 11 Downing Street since 1997; and how much was paid for the use of the venue in each case. [164386]

The Prime Minister: As was the practice under previous administrations, I have hosted a number of political events at Downing Street. The costs of these were met by the Labour Party.

Register of Interests

Bob Spink: To ask the Prime Minister what the requirements are on officials in his Office to declare current interests; and what register of interests is kept for his officials. [164705]

The Prime Minister: The rules on the disclosure of interests are set out in section 4.3 of the Civil Service Management Code.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Iraq

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Solicitor-General which non-governmental *(a)* experts and *(b)* lawyers advised her Department on the legality of war in Iraq; how much each received in public funds; and if she will make a statement. [161700]

The Solicitor-General *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* No non-governmental experts or lawyers were instructed to advise the Law Officers on whether the war in Iraq was lawful.

Overseas Bribery

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General how many people specialise in combating overseas bribery in the *(a)* Crown Prosecution Service and *(b)* Serious Fraud Office. [163489]

The Solicitor-General: Prosecutions under part 12 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2002 are undertaken by corruption specialists within CPS Casework Directorate.

Taking account of part-time workers, there were 60.3 senior prosecutors within CPS Casework Directorate at 1 March 2004, all of whom have experience of either corruption prosecutions, international work or both.

In view of the very small number of cases so far referred to CPS Casework Directorate, no prosecutor currently specialises exclusively in dealing with overseas corruption.

All SFO lawyers and investigators are required to have a thorough knowledge of fraud related offences, including corruption and the offences falling under part 12 of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. However, the Serious Fraud Office does not allocate its staff resource to a particular type of crime or case. Each case referred to the SFO is assessed on its individual merits, including allegations of bribery by UK citizens or companies overseas. As such there are no staff members whose role is solely the investigation and prosecution of overseas bribery.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Solicitor-General when she will write to the hon. Member for Ceredigion with a substantive answer to the question tabled by him on 13 October 2003, reference 132362. [161918]

The Solicitor-General: A reply was sent following prorogation and a copy placed in the Library. An additional copy has been sent to the hon. Member.

Youth Matters

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Solicitor-General what youth matters she has considered recently. [148038]

The Solicitor-General: I have considered a wide range of youth matters recently, including persistent young offenders, the street crime initiative, anti-social behaviour orders, sexual offences against children and protection of child witnesses.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

China

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations have been made to the Chinese Government on *(a)* removing the death sentence imposed on the Buddhist religious leader, Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche and *(b)* allowing a fair retrial in the presence of international impartial observers. [164343]

Mr. Rammell: I raised the case with Assistant Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui in Beijing on 17 December 2003. He replied that Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche had had a fair and public trial and been sentenced in accordance with Chinese law. His case was also recently raised at the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue session held in Dublin on 26–27 February 2004.

We and our EU partners have raised in a series of demarches with the Chinese authorities our serious concerns about the way in which the trial was conducted and the lack of transparency. The latest EU demarche took place in Beijing on 4 February. In response, Mr. Wang Min, Deputy Director General of the Department of International Organisations and Conferences at the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche was in good health and being held in Chuandong prison, Sichuan province.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on the Chinese arms embargo. [163806]

Mr. Rammell: The European Council on 12 December 2003 invited the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) to re-examine the EU Arms Embargo on China. The GAERC met on 26 January 2004 and decided to remit the issue to the relevant working groups for detailed examination. The issue will revert to a future GAERC.

The Government welcome the review and Ministers are currently considering the UK's position. In the meantime we will continue fully to implement the Arms Embargo.

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* his Chinese counterpart and *(b)* the Chinese Ambassador to the Court of St. James regarding the use of Chinese airspace and refuelling facilities in respect of the transport of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile technology (i) to and (ii) from North Korea. [162223]

Mr. MacShane: We regularly discuss, at both ministerial and official level, a range of non-proliferation issues with the Government of China. Such discussions include the proliferation activities of North Korea, which are a matter of mutual concern.

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 16 February 2004, with regard to Irene Clare Garner. [163302]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 24 March 2004.

Elections (International Observers)

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the likely impact on transparency and fairness of providing international observers at forthcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in *(a)* South Africa, *(b)* Malawi, *(c)* the Philippines, *(d)* Indonesia, *(e)* Botswana, *(f)* Ireland, *(g)* Niger, *(h)* the United States of America, *(i)* Namibia, *(j)* Malaysia, *(k)* Mozambique, *(l)* Sudan and *(m)* Ghana; and if he will make a statement. [163232]

Mr. Rammell: The Government support the presence of international election observers as they help promote fair and democratic elections. They provide an independent and neutral appraisal and, although the recommendations are not legally binding, they provide objective guidance for the government in question. Furthermore, the international presence enhances public confidence in the election process, helping to strengthen the respect for human rights and to prevent tension and violence.

It is generally the case that international missions are sent to observe elections at the invitation of the government of the country in question. Currently, the EU has a mission in Indonesia and in Sri Lanka and will shortly be deploying a mission to Malawi. The OSCE is planning election observation missions to the USA and to Ireland. UK observers participate in all of these missions.

Embassy and High Commission Land

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much embassy and high commission land has been sold in each year since 1998; and what the value was in pounds sterling. [163830]

Mr. Rammell: The value and areas of land that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has sold since 1998 are as follows:

Financial year	*Area sold square metre*	*Sale proceeds (£000)*
1998–99	9,400	383
1999–2000	142,454.4	18,652
2000–01	—	—
2001–02	11,881	20,041
2002–03	19,132.6	1,787
2003–04	1,500	112

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the *(a)* high commissions and *(b)* embassies from which land has been sold in each year since 1998. [163831]

Mr. Rammell: In each year since 1998 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has sold land at the following posts:

	Post
2001–02	British High Commission, Singapore
2001–02	British High Commission, Valletta
2002–03	British High Commission, Pretoria
1998–99	British High Commission, Quito
1999–2000	British Embassy, Dublin
2001–02	British Embassy, Kiev
2002–03	British Consulate-General, Alexandria
2003–04	British Embassy, Kiev

Iran

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to impose trade sanctions on Iran; and if he will make a statement. [163536]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has no plans to impose trade sanctions on Iran, a country with which we have normal diplomatic relations.

Iraq

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list, for each month since it was established, the total income from oil revenues paid into the development fund for Iraq. [163083]

Mr. Rammell: Information on the amount of Iraqi oil produced each month from May 2003 to January 2004 inclusive is given in the following table. Information on the amount paid for the oil is not publicly available. However, as of 5 March 2004, a total of US $6.18 billion of oil proceeds had been received by the Development Fund for Iraq. This information is available through the Coalition Provisional Authority website at www.cpa-iraq.org/budget/DFI introl.html.

Iraqi oil production (million barrels per day)	*Net production*
May 2003	0.28
June 2003	0.44
July 2003	0.70
August 2003	1.11
September 2003	1.41
October 2003	1.58
November 2003	1.92
December 2003	1.97
January 2004	2.04

[1] Estimated Iraqi oil supply net of re-injected crude oil.

Israel

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the US Administration about the Israeli wall. [163834]

Mr. Rammell: We are in regular contact with the US Administration, at all levels, about the situation in the Middle East including the Israeli security barrier.

Press Releases

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on which

occasions since 1 January 2003 his Department has quoted an official from a foreign Government in the title of a press release. [163660]

Mr. Straw: My Press Office has checked its database for all press releases issued since January 2003. No quotes from foreign government officials have been found in any of the titles.

Canada

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Canadian Government on seal culling in that country; and if he will make a statement. [163618]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We last made formal representations to the Canadian Government in 1999. The Canadian authorities are fully aware of our views. We do not accept the need for any seal cull, but if one does take place it should be sustainable and based on a precautionary principle.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his officials have had with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka about the needs of Muslims in Sri Lanka. [163363]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: In their contacts with representatives of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) officials from the British high commission in Sri Lanka regularly raise concerns regarding community relations in LTTE-held areas including the situation of the Muslim community.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking to stop the displacement of Muslims in Sri Lanka. [163364]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The forced displacement in the past of large numbers of the Muslim community in parts of North and East Sri Lanka by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam is one of the many regrettable aspects of the conflict. A large number of Muslims remain internally displaced. Their reintegration and that of other internally displaced people will be a major issue for a permanent peace agreement to address. We are not aware of any significant recent displacements of Muslims although relations between Muslim, Tamil and Sinhalese communities in eastern Sri Lanka remains an issue of concern. The Government, through the Global Conflict Prevention Pool, are currently funding work by local NGOs to develop early warning mechanisms to prevent local disputes in the east from escalating.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of progress in the Sudan peace talks. [163978]

Mr. Mullin: The current round of peace talks had been due to adjourn on 16 March but have now been extended until 31 March 2004. The First-Vice President and the Chairman of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement continue to discuss the outstanding issues. We remain hopeful that a framework agreement will be finalised soon.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the fighting between the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Lord's Resistance Army in Southern Sudan. [163981]

Mr. Mullin: We are aware of recent reports of skirmishes between the Ugandan rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army, and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in southern Sudan but have no confirmed details.

However, we recognise that Sudan has a potentially significant role to play in the resolution of the conflict in northern Uganda and are encouraged by recent efforts at cooperation between the two countries. We continue to emphasise this through our Embassy in Khartoum and in ministerial exchanges.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the role of the Government of Chad in the conflict in Darfur. [163979]

Mr. Mullin: We welcome the Government of Chad's readiness to help the parties to the conflict to find a solution to Darfur's problems, and its continued support to the 110,000 Sudanese refugees whom they are currently hosting.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the US Administration on the situation in Darfur. [163980]

Mr. Mullin: We are in daily contact with the US Administration about the situation in Darfur and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development spoke to the Administrator of the US Agency for International Development about Darfur on 10 March 2004. We are working closely with the US to get the parties to re-establish a ceasefire, preferably with international monitoring, to permit humanitarian access to all those in need, and to resume talks to find a peaceful solution to Darfur's problems.

Travel Guidance

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what guidance is issued to British embassies and high commissions abroad on appropriate support to *(a)* visiting Government Ministers, *(b)* visiting select committees, *(c)* select committee members travelling individually and *(d)* visiting hon. Members; and if he will publish the guidelines in full. [163468]

Mr. Straw: Guidance on handling visiting select committees, individual MPs and opposition front bench Members is available to all Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) staff, at home and abroad, on the FCO intranet. I have placed copies of the relevant guidance in

the Library of the House. The FCO does not issue specific guidance on what level of support should be provided for visiting Government Ministers or select committee members travelling individually.

Australia

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will discuss with his Australian counterpart a mutual prisoner exchange scheme; and if he will make a statement. [163548]

Mr. Mullin: There is already a mutual prisoner exchange scheme in place. Australia acceded to the Council of Europe Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons (CECTSP) in January 2003. The Council of Europe Convention is a multilateral agreement. As of March 2004, the convention has 54 signatories including the UK. HM Prison Service is currently aware of five British nationals in Australia who are seeking to transfer back to the UK.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Officials

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office which former officials of the Office have asked for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst and Young and *(d)* KPMG. [156912]

Mr. Alexander: All civil servants are subject to the business appointment rules, which set out the circumstances in which they must seek permission to accept outside appointments within two years of leaving the Service. A copy of the rules is available in the Libraries of the House. Information about appointments taken up by the most senior staff is published in the annual reports of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments. The next annual report will be published shortly.

In respect of permissions requested since 2001 there has been a single application under the Business Appointments rules from a former Cabinet Office employee wishing to join KPMG. This application was approved.

DirectGov

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) how many people *(a)* have so far been employed and *(b)* it is planned will be employed on the DirectGov project; [161834]

(2) what the cost has been of the establishment of the DirectGov service; what the running costs of the service will be; and if he will make a statement; [161852]

(3) what plans his Department has to expand the DirectGov service; what the cost implications of those plans are; what assessment he has made of how greater efficiency in the provision of Government services could be gained through DirectGov; and if he will make a statement. [161853]

Mr. Alexander: DirectGov is the Government's new online service, currently accessible via the UK Online website. Directgov is designed around the needs of the user, making it much easier to find and access Government information and services electronically. The DirectGov site will be expanded over the coming months in both structure and content, taking stakeholder and user feedback into consideration.

Currently the existing UK Online team of 39 staff within the Office of the e-envoy manage the project and have a combined programme and infrastructure budget of £4.4 million. The future budget and staffing of DirectGov will—be decided in conjunction with the site expansion.

Official Data

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what plans there are to co-ordinate the Office for National Statistics citizen information project, the Home Office identification cards database plan and the NHS health records spine. [163155]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the Registrar General for England and Wales, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Ian Gibson, dated 29 March 2004:

As Registrar General for England & Wales, I have been asked to reply to your recent parliamentary question on the Citizen Information Project (CIP) and other government initiatives. (163155)

The CIP, the National Identity Register (part of the Government's proposals for an identity card scheme) and the NHS data spine are separate but complementary projects. I fully recognise the need for effective communication between these initiatives and we are working hard to support this. For example, the Home Office and the Department of Health are represented at senior level on the CIP Project Board and there is ONS representation on the ID Cards Programme Board.

However the programmes are at different stages and as yet there has not been ministerial approval to implement CIP. Therefore, the main objective is to ensure that the programmes are proceeding in such a manner that would allow integration in the future if appropriate whilst continuing to work closely and liaise at every stage of the development phase.

Secondments

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG have made to the Office since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from the Office have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [156926]

Mr. Alexander: The Government are committed to developing a modern, flexible, outward-focused civil service that works in partnership with all sectors of society. Interchange is a key tool in meeting that

commitment. Secondments are encouraged as part of the interchange programme, which promotes the exchange of people and good practice between the civil service and other organisations. Before an interchange can occur all parties must be satisfied that no conflict of interest arises. In all cases agreement is reached with the parent organisation on the salary reimbursed by the Cabinet Office to ensure it falls in the civil service pay range appropriate to the post.

The following table gives the number of secondees from 2001 from each of the organisations named in the question.

Seconded from	*(i) Period of secondment (months)*	*Management Unit*
(a) PricewaterhouseCoopers	12	Performance and Innovation Unit
(3 individuals)	12	Performance and Innovation Unit
	11	Prime Minister's Delivery Unit
(b) Deloitte & Touche	6	Office of Public Service Reform
(2 individuals)	12	Shareholder Executive
(c) Ernst & Young	n/a	n/a
(nil)		
(d) KPMG	17	Performance and Innovation Unit
(4 individuals)	16	Office of the e-Envoy
	14	Office of the e-Envoy
	24	Prime Minister's Delivery Unit

Seconded to	*(A) Period of secondment (months)*
(a) PricewaterhouseCoopers (nil)	n/a
(b) Deloitte & Touche (1 individual)	24
(c) Ernst & Young (nil)	n/a
(d) KPMG (nil)	n/a

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Double Decker Buses (Tourism)

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what research has been carried out into the role of the red double decker as a tourist attraction in London. [164145]

Mr. Caborn: Tourism and transport policy in London is the responsibility of the Mayor and the Greater London Authority (GLA). The GLA have advised me that the phased replacement of the red double-decker "Routemaster" buses is being carried out to improve efficiency, safety, security and accessibility. I also understand that the Mayor is, however, well aware of the iconic significance of the red double-decker for London and is actively looking at ways that a limited number can be kept on central London streets in the long term.

Employment Agencies

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the employment agencies which her Department has used to supply temporary staff in each financial year since 1996–97 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [163814]

Mr. Caborn: The following employment agencies have been used to supply temporary staff for each financial year:

	Employment agency
1997–98	Hays Accountancy
	FSS Financial
	Reed
	Barclay Simpson
1998–99	Hays Accountancy
	FSS Financial
	Barclay Simpson
	Reed
1999–2000	Hays Accountancy
	Reed
	Josephine Sammons
2000–01	Hays Accountancy
	Barclay Simpson
	Oldfield Ellis Associates Ltd
	Josephine Sammons
2001–02	Hays Accountancy
	Adecco
	Oldfield Ellis Associates Ltd
	Josephine Sammons
	Accountancy Additions
2002–03	Lawson Bishop
	Adecco
	Accountancy Additions
	Josephine Sammons
2003–04	Lawson Bishop
	Adecco
	Accountancy Additions
	Josephine Sammons

Note:
There are no records prior to 1997–98.

Green Spaces Funding

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding has been allocated in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* in total to playing fields and community green spaces. [163653]

Mr. Caborn: The joint Sport England and New Opportunities Fund (NOF) programme 'Active England' will provide over £108 million to create new and improved community sports facilities in England. It is anticipated that a number of the applications made for Active England funding will be for playing fields.

During the past three years, the Sport England Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces programme, which formed part of the NOF £130 million Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities initiative, has invested £19,429,648 into 227 projects providing new or improved playing fields for community access. Of these 216 are now complete.

Public Libraries

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money has been spent on public library *(a)* buildings and *(b)* books in (i) the East Midlands and (ii) West Derbyshire in each year since 1997. [163742]

Estelle Morris: Other than the information contained within the Annual Public Library Statistics published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), and available in the Library of the House, data of this kind is not held centrally.

CIPFA included regional breakdowns in the library statistics for the first time in 2001–02 and this is the only year for which these figures are available currently. The premises and books and pamphlets expenditure figures for the East Midlands Region for 2001–02 are shown as follows.

The CIPFA statistics are broken down to library authority level. The relevant figures for Derbyshire are shown as follows. Derbyshire County Council will be able to supply information for the West Derbyshire area specifically.

£

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Expenditure on library premises					
East Midlands	—	—	—	—	6,141,184
Derbyshire	855,560	1,035,674	1,053,910	1,027,767	1,204,009
Expenditure on books					
East Midlands	—	—	—	—	6,399,848
Derbyshire	908,850	963,742	919,776	911,430	918,985

National Lottery

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much Lottery expenditure has been allocated to sporting projects in *(a)* the East Midlands and *(b)* West Derbyshire in each of the past five years, broken down by Lottery distributor. [163743]

Estelle Morris: The information shown in the table is broken down by calendar year. It is derived from information supplied to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport by the Lottery Distribution bodies. It refers to the constituency of West Derbyshire, and the whole of the East Midlands region.

£

	West Derbyshire		*East Midlands*	
	Sport England	*UK sport*	*Sport England*	*UK sport*
1995	108,199	0	6,263,431	0
1996	2,500	0	3,681,775	0
1997	615,500	0	11,146,998	0
1998	914,215	0	33,631,371	0
1999	462,728	417,557	4,139,890	3,216,703
2000	1,457,173	0	28,322,216	5,179,090
2001	1,992,653	0	30,407,031	8,397,200
2002	553,762	0	12,708,685	0
2003	0	0	10,033,598	527,700

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EU Development Assistance

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the commitment of EU development assistance to the EU/European Bank for Reconstruction and Development investment preparation facility in 2002. [163862]

Hilary Benn: The EU/EBRD Investment Preparation Facility (IPF), which ran until the end of 2003, was part of the EC regular Tacis budget. The facility essentially consisted of EC technical cooperation funds for EBRD projects in the countries of the former Soviet Union. In 2002 the EU/EBRD IPF amounted to a total Euro 10 million, of which Euro 2 million have been committed. The facility has, to this date, supported projects in the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Iraq

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if his Department will undertake an assessment of *(a)* the benefits of establishing credit unions in Iraq and *(b)* changing existing banking legislation to that end. [163353]

Hilary Benn: DFID has no plans to undertake an assessment of the benefits of establishing credit unions in Iraq, nor of changes to the existing banking legislation.

We recognise the need to increase the availability of finance to small businesses in Iraq. For this reason DFID is providing a grant of US$15 million to the International Finance Corporation in support of its US$200 million Small Business Finance Facility. This facility will provide funds for loans to small businesses, and technical assistance to develop the skills of Iraqi banks in making such loans.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what income status Iraq has for aid purposes. [163617]

Hilary Benn: Despite its current low income levels, Iraq is classified by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) as a Lower Middle-Income Country. Aid to Iraq is counted by the DAC as Official Development Assistance.

The World Bank estimates Iraq's per capita GDP in 2003 to have been between US$480 to $630; i.e. low enough to put it in the low income category. GDP is

however expected to grow rapidly over the coming years. GDP per head was as high as US$3,600 in the early 1980s.

Palestine

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he will respond to the recommendations of the International Development Committee Report on Development Assistance and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. [163916]

Hilary Benn: DFID responded to the recommendations of the International Development Select Committee report into the humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza on the 16 March. The IDC will be publishing DFID's response on Tuesday 30 March and copies will be available from the Vote Office.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to the Israeli Government regarding pollution of water sources in the *(a)* West Bank and *(b)* Gaza Strip by Israeli settlements. [163555]

Hilary Benn: DFID is working with the Palestinian Water Authority to help improve the understanding, and protection of the West Bank and Gaza's water resources. This is important in helping to improve access to safe drinking water. Data have shown that pollution of water sources from Palestinian villages and towns is the highest by volume, but pollution from Israeli settlements is higher per capita. The Government have not made any specific representations to the Israeli Government on this matter.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the cost of projects funded by the UK directly or through the EU in the Occupied Territories which have been damaged by Israeli military operations; and if he will make a statement. [163646]

Hilary Benn: The total value of damaged projects funded by the EU (either bilaterally by member States or by the European Commission) is £26.5 million. Approximately one-sixth of this is projects solely funded by the EC. UK bilateral funding is largely technical cooperation. Physical damage caused by Israeli military operations has been minimal, and comprises damage to a few project vehicles.

British Overseas Territories

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many *(a)* families and *(b)* children in each British Overseas Territory are living in poverty; and if he will make a statement. [164340]

Hilary Benn: This detailed information requested is not available, as it is not collected on a regular basis by the Overseas Territories and to do so would be highly resource intensive for their Governments. However, research published recently by the Caribbean Development Bank suggests that, while there is some poverty in the UK Caribbean Overseas Territories as elsewhere, there is little that is extreme by global standards.

DFID believes the same applies to St. Helena, where precise data are also very limited. More generally, people in the Overseas Territories are largely able to satisfy their basic nutritional requirements; all Overseas Territories are classified internationally as being of 'middle income' status or above; and all Overseas Territories have met, or have largely met, the Millennium Development Goals. DFID's development assistance to those Overseas Territories that still require it, which in the Financial Year just ending is expected to total some £39 million, includes particular focus on the needs of the poorer and more vulnerable members of the island communities.

TRANSPORT

Bicycle Helmets

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to bring forward legislation to make the wearing of bicycle helmets compulsory on *(a)* A roads, *(b)* B roads and *(c)* on public footpaths. [163377]

Mr. Jamieson: Our position on compulsion has been that at current wearing rates it would cause enforcement difficulties and could have an effect on cycling levels. But the Government will keep its policies in this as in all areas under review in the light of discussion in Parliament and elsewhere.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will seek information about the advantages and disadvantages of compulsory cycle helmet use in *(a)* the USA, *(b)* Australia, *(c)* Canada and *(d)* New Zealand. [163408]

Mr. Jamieson: We have commissioned research which, while not the main focus, has considered the effect of compulsion overseas. The Transport Research Laboratory report on cycle helmet wearing relating to 1999 included a literature review of the effects of compulsion, in association with promotional initiatives, overseas. Case studies showed that helmet wearing increased substantially in the USA and Australia. In Australia there was a reported 70 per cent. decrease in cyclist head injuries. The review did not contain any information on the implications for cycling levels.

An independent review commissioned by the Department on the effectiveness of cycle helmets, and published at the end of November 2002, conducted a further literature review on the effect of compulsion overseas. It found that there was a significant rise in the wearing rate following compulsion in provinces and states in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA. There was also a known marked decrease in casualties, confirmed for Australia (70 per cent.), and also New Zealand (30 per cent.). However only Australia monitored the cycling level pre and post legislation and they saw a drop in the amount of cycling following compulsion. The conclusion was that compulsion significantly raises the wearing rate of helmets and does reduce casualties. However this is at the expense of lowering the amount of cycling.

East London Line

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to ensure that the tender specification for the East London Line extension project will reach the commercial market by the end of this financial year. [156994]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority has now put its procurement proposals to the Department. The proposals raise a range of important issues that we will need to consider carefully, in the context of the forthcoming spending review.

Employment Agencies

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the employment agencies which his Department and its predecessors have used to supply temporary staff in each financial year since 1996–97 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [163819]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport was formed on 29 May 2002 following Machinery of Government changes. Its predecessors were DoT, DETR and DTLR. To produce information on these Departments would involve disproportionate cost. Hence the information provided here covers financial years 2002–03 and 2003–04 only.

The Department for Transport currently has a framework agreement with three employment agencies for supply of temporary administrative and secretarial staff below senior civil service. These are:

Adecco, Brook Street and Reed Solutions.

In addition, the Department for Transport Finance Directorate has occasionally used temporary staff with specialist finance skills from the following agencies:

Badenoch and Clark
Goodman Masson
Grainger West
Hays Accountancy
Internal Audit People
Marks Sattin
Michael Page International
Parker Bridge.

EU Freight Facilities Grants

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much has been given to UK companies in EU freight facilities grants in each of the last three years; and how many UK companies benefited in each year; [162994]

(2) what the criteria are for UK companies to qualify for EU freight facilities grants; [162995]

(3) for what purposes UK companies operating in Sussex have benefited from EU freight facilities grants in the last three years. [162996]

Mr. Jamieson: The freight facilities grant programme is a UK scheme rather than an EU one. But there are some EU programmes that have similar effect.

Until 2001 there was an EU programme called Pilot Actions for Combined Transport (PACT) which sought to encourage modal shift. Under this some UK companies received small amounts of funding for projects such as intermodal tracking systems and feasibility studies for projects. The Department does not have a detailed breakdown by amount received, company and year.

In 2003 the EU agreed a replacement measure called Marco Polo. This is designed to support "modal shift actions", i.e. measures to encourage the transfer of freight from road to more environmentally friendly modes of transport. In order to be eligible for funding projects should be submitted to the European Commission by a consortium of two or more undertakings established in at least two different member states. The Commission has recently completed its first call for expressions of interest but no money has yet been allocated.

Hazardous Substances (Carriage at Sea)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made in implementing the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea. [162970]

Mr. Jamieson: The UK signed the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (the HNS Convention), subject to ratification, in October 1996 as a sign of intent to proceed to ratification. The necessary enabling legislation was incorporated into the Merchant Shipping and Maritime Security Act 1997. Certain areas of the Convention are inconsistent with equivalent provisions that exist under EU Council Regulation 44/2001. Until this conflict was resolved by means of EU Council Decision (2002/971/EC) of 18 November 2002, the UK was not authorised to ratify the Convention.

My Department has recently conducted the first phase of public consultation on the implementation and ratification of the HNS Convention. The responses to the consultation are currently being analysed and work has commenced on the preparation of the draft legislation required to implement the Convention. The next stage will be a public consultation on the draft legislation, this should take place early this summer with a view to obtaining parliamentary approval in the autumn and ratification of the Convention before the end of the year.

The HNS Convention will not enter into force until 18 months after the date on which at least 12 States are party to the Convention and certain thresholds relating to quantities of hazardous and noxious substances imported by those States have been reached. There are currently four States party to the HNS Convention: Angola, Morocco, the Russian Federation and Tonga.

Heavy Goods/Public Service Vehicles

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many initial annual test failures of *(a)* heavy goods vehicles and *(b)* public service vehicles

there were in each of the last 10 years; and what the most common grounds were on which the tests were failed. [163840]

Mr. Jamieson: The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency is responsible for the annual testing of lorries, buses and coaches at its 92 test stations across the country and at specially approved operators' premises. The number of initial annual test failures for heavy goods vehicles and public service vehicles in each of the past 10 years is given in the table.

Initial annual test failures: 1993–94 to 2002–03

	Vehicle category		
	HGV motor vehicles	*HGV trailer*	*PSV*
2002–03	198,016	68,871	22,672
2001–02	182,826	70,193	22,074
2000–01	177,777	64,793	20,711
1999–2000	167,842	59,456	19,496
1998–99	175,944	59,998	21,353
1997–98	175,925	56,921	20,647
1996–97	164,273	51,179	21,010
1995–96	156,429	47,586	21,368
1994–95	152,070	47,228	22,407
1993–94	155,342	48,030	24,821

The most common defects found that resulted in an initial annual test failure for HGV motor vehicles are headlamp aim and service brake performance. For HGV trailers, the most common defects found are service brake and parking brake performance. For PSVs the most common defects are headlamp aim and body (interior). Examples of the latter include seat condition, passenger grab rails, fire extinguishers and provision of first aid kit.

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many PG9s were issued to *(a)* heavy goods vehicles and *(b)* public service vehicles in each of the past 10 years; and what the most common grounds were on which they were issued. [163841]

Mr. Jamieson: The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency issues prohibitions (PG9s) to vehicles which have significant defects. Prohibitions may be issued to vehicles examined during the course of VOSA's roadside enforcement activities (including vehicles seen on operators' premises) or at the time of presentation for annual test. Depending on the severity of the defect, the prohibition notice may come into force immediately or be delayed from coming into force for up to 10 days from the date of inspection.

The number of prohibitions issued (immediate and delayed) to heavy goods vehicles and public service vehicles from 1995–96 to 2002–03 is shown in the table. Figures are not available before 1995–96.

Prohibitions issued: 1995–96 to 2002–03

	Vehicle category		
	HGV motor vehicle	*HGV trailer*	*PSV*
2002–03	18,276	6,913	3,919
2001–02	17,343	5,164	3,666
2000–01	17,669	5,116	3,764
1999–2000	18,012	4,989	3,783
1998–99	17,320	5,094	3,509
1997–98	19,686	5,625	4,481
1996–97	21,970	6,797	5,259
1995–96	19,009	5,702	4,585

The most common prohibition defects at both spot and fleet checks for HGV motor vehicles and trailers are lamps and brake systems and components. For PSVs, the most common prohibition defects are in relation to the body interior and oil and waste leaks.

Level Crossings (Pollution)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to encourage drivers to switch off their engines while being held at full-length level crossing gates. [163967]

Mr. Jamieson: The impacts of switching off and restarting engines after a short period of time are complex and not consistent for different pollutants, such action could actually increase the overall emission level of certain types of pollutant. The effect on vehicle emissions will be dependent on factors such as the type of engine, its state of maintenance and the length of time for which the engine is switched off. It is therefore not considered appropriate to recommend engine switch-off at level crossings.

Maritime Security

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what responsibility *(a)* his Department and *(b)* Transec will have for maritime security under the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code; [163578]

(2) what responsibility he will have for maritime security under the terms of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code. [163579]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department for Transport is the Designated Authority to oversee the implementation and compliance of the International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) Code in the United Kingdom.

Reporting directly to the Secretary of State, the Department for Transport's Transport Security Directorate (Transec) has the policy lead and is responsible for introducing the ISPS Code requirements to approximately 600 UK port facilities and over 600 UK flagged ships by the deadline of the 1 July 2004. Operationally Transec is responsible for UK ports and passenger shipping, and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has been delegated responsibility for non-passenger shipping, under a policy framework set by Transec.

Merchant Fleet

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the size of the British merchant fleet was *(a)* in 1980, *(b)* in 1990 and *(c)* on the latest date for which figures are available; and what plans he has to support the merchant fleet. [163535]

Mr. Jamieson: The size of the British registered trading fleet (including the Isle of Man and Channel Islands) of vessels 500 gross tons and over, in these years was as follows.

End year	Thousand wt.
1980	42,308
1990	7,446
2003	19,719

The Government's shipping policy to support the merchant fleet is outlined in the White Paper "British Shipping: Charting a new course". An update of the current status of the 33 actions from 'Charting' has been placed in the Libraries of the House in accordance with the answer of 24 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 343W.

Piracy

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with the International Maritime Organisation about international action to combat piracy. [163343]

Mr. Jamieson: The United Kingdom, as a permanent member of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), has taken a leading role in addressing the issue of action to combat piracy. Over the past five years the United Kingdom has provided expert assistance in support of several IMO counter piracy missions and seminars to piracy 'hotspot' areas.

The United Kingdom is in the process of implementing IMO requirements for all ships to have internationally agreed security measures in place by July 2004 which will help to protect them from piracy attacks.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what losses were incurred by *(a)* British-flagged and *(b)* British-managed ships owing to acts of piracy in each of the last 10 years. [163344]

Mr. Jamieson: There was no loss of life as a result of piracy attacks on the British Fleet from 1 January 1994 to 31 December 2003.

During the same period, there were a total of 64 recorded piracy attacks on British registered ships.

There are no available figures for British-managed ships.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the future trends of piracy against British vessels. [163345]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department works closely with operators of British vessels, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence, the International Maritime Bureau and with the International Maritime Organisation to ensure that trends of piracy are monitored and acted upon. This work is carried out in co-operation with IMO member states and the United Kingdom has played a leading role in providing expertise and other resources to help combat acts of piracy worldwide.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met representatives of *(a)* ship owners and *(b)* maritime trade unions to discuss piracy. [163346]

Mr. Jamieson: The issue of piracy is regularly discussed by officials in the Department with representatives of the UK maritime industry and its trade bodies; in particular the Chamber of Shipping. This is done directly or under the auspices of the National Maritime Security Committee which meets bi-annually. Similarly, meetings are held with representatives of maritime trade unions the most recent of which was with representatives of NUMAST in September 2003.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last discussed sea piracy with the Secretary of State for Defence. [163347]

Mr. Jamieson: The Secretary of State has regular meetings with his ministerial colleagues to discuss a range of issues relevant to the business of his Department. In addition, his officials are engaged in discussions on piracy with other Government Departments including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence and external bodies, including the International Maritime Organisation and the International Maritime Bureau.

Queen Elizabeth Bridge, Dartford

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he estimates that the costs of the Queen Elizabeth Bridge, Dartford will have been met through toll fees. [163832]

Mr. Jamieson: The financial break-even date was met on 31 March 2002. The legislation governing the Dartford Crossing (which includes the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge) allowed for tolls to be charged for a year after the financial break-even date to help build up a maintenance fund for the Crossing.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the toll is to be removed from the Queen Elizabeth Bridge, Dartford. [163833]

Mr. Jamieson: The power to charge a toll for the use of the Dartford Crossing (which includes the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge) expired on 31 March 2003.

Following a study and a public consultation, a road user charge under the provisions of the Transport Act 2000 was introduced on 1 April 2003 to help manage traffic at the Crossing.

Rail Services

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with the Strategic Rail Authority on improving the service on the Hastings to London line; what assessment he has made of the *(a)* punctuality and *(b)* frequency of trains departing stations south of Tunbridge Wells; and if he will make a statement. [164385]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority is currently consulting widely on its proposals for the train specification for the new Integrated Kent Franchise, which includes the route between Hastings and London.

The authority also monitors the performance of train operating companies. On 11 March the authority published its quarterly report—National Rail Trends—for the period October to December 2003, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House. Information is provided for the services of each operator in aggregate, not by specific routes.

Ships and Containers (Scanning)

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much *(a)* was spent in 2003–04 and *(b)* is planned to be spent in 2004–05 on improving the process of scanning of ships and containers upon their arrival in British ports; [163580]

(2) how much his Department has spent on enhancing container security *(a)* in British ports and *(b)* on British ships since May 1997. [163636]

Mr. Jamieson: My Department's Transport Security Directorate (Transec) is responsible for developing, overseeing the implementation of, and ensuring industry compliance with, Counter Terrorist security policy for the UK's major transport modes.

However, in the UK the cost of meeting these security requirements falls to industry. The "user pays" principle has been maintained throughout the country's history of regulating transport security and costs are ultimately passed on to customers.

It is not therefore, possible to give an indication of costs because they are not held centrally. However, as part of the implementation process of the IMO's new maritime security regime, Transec is conducting an Regulatory Impact Assessment, which will, when complete provide a broad picture of the costs associated with meeting the UK's new security requirements. The RIA will include consideration of the cost of enhancing the security of ports handling containers.

Speed Cameras

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many speed cameras there are in England and Wales; and how many are covered by the special schemes introduced in 2002 to facilitate investment in safety cameras. [150646]

Mr. Jamieson: Information from the 35 Safety Camera Partnerships currently operating, covering 38 of the 43 police authorities in England and Wales, indicates that there are currently 5,040 fixed and mobile camera locations, of which 432 are for detecting motorists going through red traffic lights. This data is currently being audited.

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many speed cameras *(a)* there are and *(b)* there have been in each of the last five years in (i) the East Midlands and (ii) West Derbyshire. [150925]

Mr. Jamieson: The numbers of approved speed cameras sites operated by local Partnerships under the Safety Camera Programme for the areas covered by the Government Office for the East Midlands are as follows.

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*[1]
Derbyshire	Prior to the area's joining the Programme	53	76	84
Leicestershire	Prior to the area's joining the Programme	Prior to the area's joining the Programme	71	81
Lincolnshire	36	37	56	54
Northamptonshire	13	28	30	25
Nottinghamshire[2]	15	16	52	52

[1] Figures up to the end of September 2003 (latest figures submitted)

[2] Nottingham City in early years; Nottinghamshire latterly

Note:

All figures are as reported by the partnerships and include both fixed and mobile camera sites

The numbers for West Derbyshire are included in those provided for Derbyshire.

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W, on speed cameras, how much of the income generated by speed cameras in the Lancashire Safety Camera Partnership area in 2003–04 is returned to the partnership to cover the costs of their camera activity; and where the remainder of the income is spent. [151290]

Mr. Jamieson: A maximum of £4.6 million of netted off fine receipts resulting from fixed penalties for speeding and red light offences has been approved to be passed to the Lancashire Safety Camera Partnership to cover the costs of its approved safety camera activity in 2003–04. The actual figure, which may be less but cannot be more, will be contained in the 2003–04 accounts. Any surplus of fixed penalties over the Partnership's approved expenditure is surrendered to the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library the latest accounts of each safety camera partnership. [158217]

Mr. Jamieson: Local authorities and police forces within individual safety camera partnerships make available for public scrutiny their accounts on an annual basis. These can be viewed by local arrangement.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans there are to improve the visibility of speed camera warning signs on the trunk road network. [163624]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* The "Handbook of rules and guidance for the operation of the national road safety programme for England and Wales, October 2003", a copy of which is in the Library of the House, sets out the standards for signing, marking, visibility and conspicuity of safety cameras. The Handbook also requires Safety Camera Partnerships regularly to review camera sites, to ensure for example that cameras are not obscured by foliage growth. The types of signs that may be used are contained in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002. There are no current plans to alter these signing requirements. If there is a concern about the visibility of particular camera sites, the local Safety Camera Partnership would welcome comments.

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many static speed cameras there are in *(a)* North East Lincolnshire, *(b)* North Lincolnshire and *(c)* Lincolnshire. [162579]

Mr. Jamieson: North East Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire fall within the Humberside Safety Camera Partnership which has no fixed safety camera sites. The Lincolnshire Safety Camera Partnership has 59 fixed speed camera sites.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many fixed speed cameras were in operation in the United Kingdom in each year from 1998 to 2003. [142263]

Mr. Jamieson: My Department holds information on speed cameras operated under the Speed Camera Programme for funding of approved cameras from fixed fine receipts, which began with seven Safety Camera Partnership areas in England and Wales in April 2000, increasing to 14 in 2001 and to 28 during 2002. The number of approved fixed speed camera locations for the three financial years is:

As at end of year	*Number of camera sites*	*Number of Partnership areas*
2000–01	311	7
2001–02	706	14
2002–03	1,387	28

My Department plans shortly to publish information on the number of safety camera locations for all Safety Camera Partnerships in England and Wales together with collision and casualty information.

Prior to the Safety Camera Programme, police and highway authorities have used cameras since 1991, under the Road Traffic Act 1991 and the Department of Transport Circular 1/92 'Use of technology for traffic enforcement: Guidance on deployment'. My Department does not hold information centrally on cameras which are not part of the Safety Camera Programme.

Tachograph Offences

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many prosecutions for tachograph offences there were in each of the last 10 years. [163838]

Mr. Jamieson: The enforcement of drivers' hours and records legislation is carried out by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency. Examiners check the tachograph equipment, tachograph charts and record books. The usual sanction imposed for any infringement of this legislation is that of prohibition. However prosecution action may also be instigated. The number of successful prosecutions for tachograph and drivers' hours offences is only available for the last seven years. Figures are shown in the table as follows:

Successful Prosecutions for Tachograph Offences

	2002–03	*2001–02*	*2000–01*	*1999–00*	*1998–99*	*1997–98*	*1996–97*
HGV							
Tach/Records	5,253	4,999	6,279	7,027	5,579	5,233	4,708
Drivers Hours	3,776	2,701	4,184	4,683	4,171	3,478	3,270
PSV							
Tach/Records	441	335	581	554	621	626	525
Drivers Hours	284	317	389	417	244	338	274

Road Accidents

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many powered two-wheeler users involved in road accidents were *(a)* killed and *(b)* seriously injured during 2003; and if he will make a statement. [163908]

Mr. Jamieson: Data are not yet available for 2003. In 2002 there were 609 deaths and 6,891 serious injuries among two-wheeled motor vehicle users.

Telecommunications Masts

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what information his Department has received from Network Rail on their plans to *(a)* lease and *(b)* sell telecommunication masts and base stations on their land to mobile phone operators; [163030]

(2) how many telecommunication masts have been erected on land owned by Network Rail since January 2002. [163031]

Mr. McNulty: Network Rail is currently implementing a new safety system known as the Global System for Mobile Communications for Railways (GSM-R). GSM-R will, for the first time, provide a national system of secure and direct driver to signaller communication.

Network Rail advises firstly, that it has no plans to commercially exploit GSM-R telecommunication masts; and secondly, that since January 2002 it has erected 188 masts, of which 176 have been installed on the West Coast Main Line as part of its modernisation.

Vehicle Inspectorate

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the annual expenditure of the former Vehicle Inspectorate was in each of the past 10 years up to 2003; what the expenditure of the vehicle inspectorate unit within the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency was in 2003; and what this unit's projected expenditure is in 2004. [163837]

Mr. Jamieson: The Vehicle Inspectorate (VI) merged with the Traffic Area Network to become the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency on 1 April 2003. As a result, separate expenditure figures cannot be supplied for the VI Division in 2003–04, or its projected expenditure in 2004–05. The annual expenditure for the Vehicle Inspectorate prior to the merger is shown as follows:

Annual expenditure: April 1993—March 2003

	£
2002–03	100,803
2001–02	89,046
2000–01	74,614
1999–00	64,924
1998–99	58,474
1997–98	53,870
1996–97	50,718
1995–96	49,348
1994–95	52,493
1993–94	49,422

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Community Legal Service

Mr. David: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people have been helped by the Community Legal Service in *(a)* 2000–01, *(b)* 2001–02 and *(c)* 2002–03. [163306]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Commission is unable to answer the question in the format requested as its systems record the number of acts of assistance rather than the number of clients assisted, which is not necessarily reflective of the number of individuals involved. The total acts of assistance dealt with by the CLS were as follows:

	Number
2000–01	1,137,000
2001–02	1,005,000
2002–03	1,017,000

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much funding has been allocated in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* total to community legal service partnerships. [163656]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Commission, which administers the Community Legal Service, does not allocate funding centrally to Community Legal Service (CLS) Partnerships. However resources have been made available at a regional level to support specific partnership related projects.

The future operation of the CLS Partnerships will be informed by the Independent Review of the CLS which is due to report in April 2004. It is therefore not appropriate to comment on the funding position for 2004–05 and 2005–06 until the final findings and recommendations of this evaluation have been fully considered.

Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many cases of computer misuse there were in his Department and its predecessor in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003, broken down by category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [163246]

Mr. Leslie: The number of cases of computer misuse in my Department and its predecessor were as follows:

Category	*1997*	*2003*
Games	1	1
Personal use	6	3
Unofficial business use	0	0
Other	0	0
Total	7	4

In each case disciplinary action has been taken in line with Departmental disciplinary procedures, which accord with the central framework set out in paragraph 4.5 of the Civil Service Management Code.

Departmental Officials

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs which former officials of the Department have asked for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG. [156907]

Mr. Leslie: The answer in respect of permissions requested since 2001 is none.

Emergency Protection Orders

Simon Hughes: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many applications were heard for emergency protection orders in Greater London in the last year for which information is available, broken down by borough; what proportion were granted; how many were ex-parte applications; and what proportion of ex-parte applications were granted. [164054]

Mr. Leslie: The requested information is not collected in a manner that can be broken down by borough as it is collected at court level only. Provided in the table attached are the numbers of applications for emergency protection orders and orders made in the family proceedings courts in Greater London. There are no county courts in this region with the relevant jurisdiction as this work is dealt with by the Principal Registry of the Family Division, whose figures have been included for reference. No information is held centrally concerning those applications that were made ex-parte and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Emergency Protection Orders 2003

Family proceedings court/PRFD	*Applications made*	*Orders made*
Barnet	13	13
Bexley	9	5
Bromley	9	9
Croydon	21	16
Ealing	20	11
Haringey	48	44
Harrow	23	23
Havering	12	11
Hounslow (Feltham)	21	21
Inner London Family Proceedings Court	290	253
Kingston-on-Thames	0	0
Redbridge	9	7
Richmond-on-Thames	4	4
South East Suffolk	12	12
South West Surrey	18	18

Emergency Protection Orders 2003

Family proceedings court/PRFD	*Applications made*	*Orders made*
Uxbridge	28	27
Willesden	24	21
Wimbledon	10	10
Principal Registry of the Family Division	131	29

Legal Services Review

Mr. David: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the findings of the Review of Supply, Demand and Purchasing of Legal Services regarding the level of solicitor involvement in the provision of publicly funded legal services since the introduction of the Community Legal Service. [163303]

Mr. Lammy: I am considering the first phase of the report on solicitors and will shortly receive the second phase on barristers. When I have both phases I will make a statement which will set out the significance of the reviews for Government policy. It would be premature to make a statement without both phases of the review. We have made available the first phase of the review to the Select Committee on Constitutional Affairs as evidence for its study into advice deserts.

Mr. David: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the Review of Supply, Demand and Purchasing of Legal Services. [163304]

Mr. Lammy: The report of the solicitor phase of the review was received in December 2003. We expect the barristers' section shortly. I am considering the recommendations carefully and will make a statement when I have both phases of the review.

Mr. David: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will publish the findings of the Review of Supply, Demand and Purchasing of Legal Services. [163305]

Mr. Lammy: I will publish the findings of the Review of Supply, Demand and Purchasing Arrangement for Legal Services when both phases complete and a copy of the report will be placed in the Library.

Lord Chancellor

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the rules preventing former Lord Chancellors from returning to practise law are to be waived in the case of the present incumbent. [162597]

Mr. Leslie: No. I refer my hon. Friend to the Prime Minister's written answer to the hon. Member for North-East Hertfordshire (Mr. Heald) of 25 June 2003, *Official Report*, column 792W.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs for what reasons former Lord Chancellors are prohibited from practising law; and if he will make a statement. [162599]

Mr. Leslie: By convention, judges have not returned to practice after retirement (and this is now included in judicial terms of appointment). The convention ensures the integrity and impartiality of the justice system. This convention has also been adhered to by former Lord Chancellors given their judicial status and role in the administration of justice. The rules, set out in the Ministerial Code, relating to the acceptance of appointments after leaving ministerial office, also apply.

Munby Judgment, November 2001

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the ruling of November 2001 by Mr. Justice Munby. [161933]

Margaret Hodge: I have been asked to reply.

In R(L and others) and R(R and anon) *v.* Manchester City Council, Mr. Justice Munby found that Manchester City Council's policy on payment to relatives and friends as carers breached Articles 8 and 14 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

The impact of the judgment is that local authority policies need to demonstrate that payment differences relate to the child's needs or the skills of the carer or some other relevant factor that is used as a basis for an authority wide policy.

Secondments

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG have made to the Department since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from the Department have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [156929]

Mr. Leslie: Since 2001 there have been two secondments to the Department from Deloitte & Touche. Both worked in the Business Support Office (BSO) in the Department's headquarters. The BSO was set up to support the introduction of programme and project work in Policy Group. Their roles contained both development work (setting up the Business Support Office and defining its roles and responsibilities) and supporting work underway in Policy Group. Their appointments were effective from 29 October 2001 until the end of July 2002.

Since 2001 there have been no secondments of staff from the Department to any of the companies specified.

Wrongful Convictions

Bob Spink: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many convictions have been found by the Court of Appeal to be wrongful in each of the last five years; and how much compensation has been paid in respect of such convictions. [163592]

Mr. Leslie: Figures for the number of convictions found by the Court of Appeal to be wrongful in each of the last five years are provided in Table 1. The figures provided by the Home Office in Table 2 do not identify the amount of compensation awards to successful appellants as they also include payments made under the Home Secretary ex-gratia scheme for wrongful conviction and/or charge.

Table 1: Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) Convictions Overturned

	Number
1998	290
1999	171
2000	150
2001	135
2002	166

Table 2: Compensation paid under ss133 Criminal Justice Act 1988 or the Home Secretary's ex-gratia scheme for wrongful conviction and/or charge

	£ million
1998–99	5.302
1999–2000	5.647
2000–01	8.051
2001–02	6.172
2002–03	8.120

NORTHERN IRELAND

Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new cancer diagnoses were made for teenagers and young adults in the 13 to 24 years age range in each of the last five years in Northern Ireland. [163888]

Angela Smith: The following table shows the annual incidence of cancer in teenagers and young adults (aged 13 to 24 years) in Northern Ireland in the last five years for which accurate cancer registration figures are available.

Cancers diagnosed

Ages 13–24	*Number*
1997	64
1998	72
1999	80
2000	68
2001	70

Census 2001

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many households in Northern Ireland contain two or more persons, excluding students, who do not see themselves as a couple, according to the 2001 Census; how many people there are in such households; how many people there are in such households where both are pensioners; and how many people he estimates there are in such households who are related. [163061]

Mr. Pearson: According to the 2001 Census, there are 69,754 households in Northern Ireland containing two or more persons who are not full-time students, where none of the people in the household see themselves as living in a married or co-habiting couple.

These 69,754 households contain 190,583 people of whom:

(i) 9,127 are living in "All Pensioner" households; and

(ii) 176,813 are related to another member of the household.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many same-sex households there are in Northern Ireland according to the 2001 Census. [163084]

Mr. Pearson: According to the 2001 Census, there are 288 households in Northern Ireland containing couples of the same-sex who indicated they are living as partners.

Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of computer misuse there were in his Department in each of the last seven years, broken down by category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [163229]

Mr. Pearson: Within the 11 Departments of the formally devolved Northern Ireland Administration and the Northern Ireland Office, there have been a total of 866 cases of computer misuse reported over the last seven years, with disciplinary action having been taken in 688 of those cases.

Cases where misuse falls into more than one category have been broken down and counted separately. The breakdown by year and category is as follows.

Category	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*Total*
Use of inappropriate or offensive material[1]	1	0	1	31	25	153	219	430
Using unlicensed software, forging e-mail addresses	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	5
Using e-mail facilities for personal use without permission	0	0	0	0	0	13	12	25
Unreasonable extensive personal use	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4
Unauthorised access to customer accounts	0	1	4	1	3	2	11	22
General misuse of a minor nature (games, using unofficial screensavers)	0	0	0	0	12	280	88	380
Total	1	1	5	33	40	454	332	866

[1] Viewing, creating, distributing, storing or downloading inappropriate or offensive material that could bring the department into disrepute or expose it to legal action.

Invest Northern Ireland

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions since April 2002 Invest Northern Ireland has taken equity in companies in Northern Ireland; and what the value is of equity taken by Invest Northern Ireland in companies in Northern Ireland since April 2002. [159743]

Mr. Pearson: Invest NI has taken equity investments in 38 companies since April 2002, these investments cost Invest NI £14.5 million.

Police Recruitment

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applicants have commenced their courses since recruitment for the Police Service of Northern Ireland began; and how many have completed their training. [163711]

Jane Kennedy: A total of 1,202 candidates have been appointed up to and including 14 March 2004 with 946 student officers attested as at 19 March 2004.

There are currently four separate intake groups undergoing the training prior to attestation.

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 583W, on police, how many recruits *(a)* dropped out of their training, *(b)* proved unsuitable and *(c)* did not take up their places. [163712]

Jane Kennedy: I have been advised that as at 1 March 2004 and in total *(a)* 22 student officers resigned *(b)* 10 were dismissed and two were suspended and *(c)* 33 chose not take up their places.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Asylum-seeking Children

Alan Keen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children have been under the care of the London Borough of Hounslow since 1998; and how many in that time left care having reached 18 years of age. [162501]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* Information on unaccompanied asylum seeking children being 'looked after' (within the meaning of the Children Act 1989) by local authorities was collected for the first time in 2002. On 31 March 2002, there were 15 children (rounded to the nearest five) under the age of 18 years looked after by London Borough of Hounslow. 2003 data will be available at the end of March 2004.

Careers Service

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his policy is on the provision of a careers service for young people; and if he will make a statement. [163649]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* Responsibility for providing young people with the advice and support they need to make informed learning and career choices is shared between Connexions and schools. Schools provide the underpinning skills young people need to investigate options and manage transitions through learning into work, through a planned programme of careers education in years nine-11 (to be extended to years seven and eight from September 2004). This is complemented by support from Connexions at key decision-making and transition points. All young people aged 13–19 have access to Connexions, with the level of support provided in each individual case being differentiated according to need.

In order to assure ourselves that the current arrangements are robust—in particular in light of changes to the 14–19 phase of education announced in January last year—we have initiated a review of careers education and guidance which will report in Summer 2004.

Child Care

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list by local authority area how many children are *(a)* aged under five years old and *(b)* aged under eight years, and the number of registered child care places. [161984]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is shown in the table. Statistics on the number of childcare places registered in England were published on 19 February 2004 in a report by OfSTED "Registered Childcare Providers and Places in England, 31 December 2003". The report is available on the OfSTED website, www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications.

Number of children[1] aged under five and eight years old and the number of registered childcare places[2,3,4]

LEA name	*Children aged under five years old*	*Children aged under eight years old*	*Number of registered childcare places*
England	2,863,700	4,688,500	1,392,800
North East	134,000	223,700	58,800
Hartlepool	5,100	8,700	2,100
Middlesbrough	8,000	13,300	4,700
Redcar and Cleveland	7,300	12,400	2,800
Stockton-on-Tees	10,100	16,900	4,400
Darlington	5,600	9,300	3,400
Durham	25,200	42,300	9,800
Northumberland	15,500	26,000	8,100
Gateshead	10,500	17,200	4,000
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	13,900	22,600	7,100
North Tyneside	10,100	16,800	4,400
South Tyneside	8,000	13,600	3,900
Sunderland	14,700	24,600	4,100
North West	384,800	636,900	195,700
Halton	7,100	11,500	4,000
Warrington	11,400	18,700	8,300
Cheshire	36,700	61,400	23,500
Cumbria	24,400	41,100	11,100
Bolton	16,200	26,700	7,700
Bury	10,900	18,000	7,300
Manchester	25,400	40,600	12,900
Oldham	15,000	24,200	7,400
Rochdale	13,300	21,800	6,800
Salford	12,100	19,900	6,200
Stockport	15,800	26,300	7,900
Tameside	12,500	20,700	6,300
Trafford	11,900	19,300	8,400
Wigan	17,000	28,300	7,800
Blackburn with Darwen	10,400	17,000	4,100
Blackpool	7,400	12,400	4,000
Lancashire	63,300	105,200	31,000

Number of children[1] aged under five and eight years old and the number of registered childcare places[2,3,4]

LEA name	*Children aged under five years old*	*Children aged under eight years old*	*Number of registered childcare places*
Knowsley	9,000	15,100	3,500
Liverpool	24,000	39,200	9,600
St. Helens	9,800	16,500	3,800
Sefton	14,200	24,500	5,300
Wirral	17,000	28,500	8,800
Yorkshire and Humberside	285,300	471,800	120,800
East Riding of Yorkshire	15,800	26,700	8,400
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	14,200	23,900	4,700
North East Lincolnshire	9,200	15,500	2,800
North Lincolnshire	8,500	14,200	3,200
York	9,100	14,800	5,300
North Yorkshire	29,100	49,100	17,900
Barnsley	12,100	20,500	3,500
Doncaster	16,600	27,400	4,900
Rotherham	14,600	24,200	4,700
Sheffield	28,300	46,600	12,900
Bradford	33,600	53,700	10,800
Calderdale	11,800	19,400	6,500
Kirklees	25,100	40,900	11,000
Leeds	39,700	65,600	19,200
Wakefield	17,600	29,300	5,000
East Midlands	234,600	388,500	121,000
Derby	13,500	21,900	6,800
Derbyshire	39,600	66,500	17,400
Leicester City	18,900	30,200	8,400
Rutland	1,800	3,000	1,200
Leicestershire	33,800	55,900	20,000
Lincolnshire	33,500	56,400	18,600
Northamptonshire	38,600	63,200	19,000
Nottingham	15,000	24,200	7700
Nottinghamshire	39,900	67,200	21,900
West Midlands	312,300	513,200	151,800
Herefordshire	9,200	15,400	5,800
Worcestershire	29,600	49,300	18,000
Telford and Wrekin	10,200	16,800	5,600
Shropshire	14,700	24,700	8,500
Stoke-on-Trent	13,400	21,800	5,700
Staffordshire	43,600	72,500	25,800
Warwickshire	28,200	46,700	16,000
Birmingham	69,300	111,000	28,100
Coventry	18,300	29,900	8,500
Dudley	17,100	28,400	6,200
Sandwell	17,900	29,200	5,600
Solihull	10,900	18,600	7,000
Walsall	16,100	26,300	5,200
Wolverhampton	13,800	22,600	5,800
East of England	315,300	518,000	156,800
Luton	13,200	21,100	4,000
Bedfordshire	24,000	39,100	12,300
Peterborough	10,100	16,600	6,600
Cambridgeshire	31,800	51,900	20,000
Southend-on-Sea	9,500	15,600	4,100
Thurrock	9,800	15,700	3,500
Essex	75,800	124,800	33,900
Hertfordshire	63,900	104,100	34,600
Norfolk	39,900	66,900	20,100
Suffolk	37,300	62,200	17,700
London	472,400	742,800	182,500
Inner London	189,500	290,200	69,200
City of London	300	400	400
Camden	12,100	18,500	5,100
Hackney	16,900	25,500	3,800
Hammersmith and Fulham	10,300	15,500	3,600
Haringey	14,800	23,000	3,900
Islington	10,900	16,800	5,100
Kensington and Chelsea	10,000	15,000	4,200
Lambeth	17,800	27,200	6,400
Lewisham	17,300	27,000	6,300
Newham	20,400	32,300	5,500
Southwark	17,100	26,600	7,600
Tower Hamlets	15,300	23,500	3,800
Wandsworth	16,400	24,500	9,500
Westminster	9,900	14,400	4,000
Outer London	282,900	452,600	113,300
Barking and Dagenham	12,300	19,900	3,100
Barnet	20,100	32,300	8,000
Bexley	13,000	21,400	5,100
Brent	16,300	25,600	5,700
Bromley	18,200	29,200	9,100
Croydon	21,900	35,600	9,500
Baling	18,800	29,700	7,800
Enfield	18,100	29,000	6,100
Greenwich	15,500	24,100	6,200
Harrow	12,000	19,500	4,900
Havering	12,200	20,600	4,600
Hillingdon	15,600	25,500	6,300
Hounslow	13,900	21,800	4,500
Kingston-upon-Thames	9,100	14,300	4,400
Merton	12,300	19,200	5,200
Redbridge	15,400	25,000	5,400
Richmond-upon-Thames	11,800	17,900	6,400
Sutton	11,200	18,200	4,500
Waltham Forest	15,200	23,800	6,500
South East	462,000	757,400	261,900
Bracknell Forest	7,300	11,900	4,400
Windsor and Maidenhead	8,100	12,900	5,200
West Berkshire	8,600	14,100	5,600
Reading	8,600	13,600	5,200
Slough	8,100	13,000	2,300
Wokingham	8,900	14,600	6,300
Milton Keynes	14,200	23,000	8,300
Buckinghamshire	30,000	48,600	17,200
Brighton and Hove	12,900	20,500	7,100
East Sussex	25,700	42,900	14,100
Portsmouth	10,700	17,100	6,600
Southampton	11,700	19,100	6,800
Hampshire	70,400	116,600	42,200
Isle of Wight	6,200	10,700	3,400
Medway	15,800	26,100	7,900
Kent	76,900	127,600	38,300
Oxfordshire	35,000	56,600	22,100
Surrey	61,500	100,200	36,500
West Sussex	41,400	68,300	22,400
South West	263,000	436,200	143,500
Bath and North East Somerset	8,800	14,300	4,500
Bristol, City of	22,700	35,700	10,100
North Somerset	10,300	17,100	4,900
South Gloucestershire	14,700	24,500	7,700
Cornwall	25,600	42,600	12,200
Isles of Scilly	100	200	100
Torbay	6,000	10,300	2,400
Plymouth	12,800	21,100	6,500
Devon	33,900	57,600	20,000
Bournemouth	8,000	13,100	4,600
Poole	6,900	11,500	3,200
Dorset	18,100	30,900	9,000
Gloucestershire	31,600	52,100	20,500
Somerset	26,500	44,200	15,900
Swindon	11,000	18,100	6,700
Wiltshire	26,000	42,900	15,200

[1] Mid year estimates 2002.

[2] Registered places are not the number of places occupied, nor the number of children who may benefit from receiving places through providers offering sessions at different times of the day. The number of registered places is likely to be higher than the actual number of registered places as not all providers will immediately inform Ofsted that they have ceased their provision. For about 7 per cent. of providers, the database does not hold the number of registered places. In these cases, the number of places has been estimated and included in the figures shown.

[3] Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Due to rounding, data may differ from that published by Ofsted.

[4] Includes childminders, full day care and sessional day care, out of school care and crèches.

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to register sitting services as accredited child care providers. [161988]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* Sitter services are becoming increasingly popular, particularly in Scotland, and we are actively investigating the role they could play in England. We believe they can be very useful as a means of enabling parents, especially lone parents, to work atypical hours, and for providing parents of disabled children with child care in their home or with respite care. In particular, using a sitter service to provide home-based child care removes the need for the parent to act as employer. The availability of such a service could also make it much easier for 24 hour service sector employers to recruit and retain employees.

Currently, sitter services do not have to be registered under the Children Act. However, as announced in the Budget, we shall be consulting in the early summer on extending the scope of accredited child care through a new light touch voluntary scheme, to be implemented by April 2005. Accreditation would enable eligible parents to gain working tax credit support for their child care costs, such support currently not being available for users of sitter services. Child care carried out in the parents' home will be considered as part of this consultation.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the *(a)* availability and *(b)* affordability of quality child care. [162621]

Margaret Hodge: The National Childcare Strategy was established in 1998 to ensure that accessible, affordable and quality child care for children up to the age of 14, and 16 for those with special needs, is available in every area.

We have funded a substantial expansion in child care provision of the public, private and voluntary sectors, with a wide variety of types of child care—nurseries, childminders, before and after school provision increasingly delivered alongside early education and other family services—to ensure diversity and choice for parents. To ensure quality National Standards for Under Eights day care and child minding were introduced from September 2001. They set a national benchmark below which no provider may fall. Responsibility for registration and inspection transferred from local authorities to the Early Years Directorate of Ofsted at that time.

By December 2003, more than 920,000 new child care places had been created since 1997, benefiting over 1.6 million children. This means that we have met our target of creating new places for 1.6 million children by March 2004, and are on track to create places for over 2 million by 2006.

At January 2004, 300,000 lower and middle income families were benefiting from the child care element of the new working tax credit, 120,000 more than benefited under the previous arrangements through working families tax credit—and over six times as many as the 47,000 who benefited from the child care disregard under the previous administration's family credit.

Child Poverty

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps his Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020, *(b)* halving it by 2010 and *(c)* reducing it by a quarter by 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [154369]

Margaret Hodge: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Work and Pensions on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1590W.

Connexions

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidelines are given to Connexions partnerships designed to allow national voluntary and community sector organisations to work efficiently with all partnerships. [161086]

Margaret Hodge: The Department for Education and Skills has, in consultation with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), developed a range of guidance for Connexions Partnerships on working with the VCS.

In addition a limited amount of funding has been given to 88 national voluntary youth organisations to help them build capacity to effectively engage with Connexions.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the progress Connexions partnerships have made towards the targets set out in Youth Support Services for 13 to 19 year olds: A Vision for 2006 in *(a)* providing a vibrant high quality youth service, *(b)* making many more young people active citizens, *(c)* engaging many more young people in developmental activities and *(d)* ensuring that parents, carers and teachers are supportive of Connexions. [161098]

Margaret Hodge: Connexions partnerships are working successfully to meet "Youth Support Services for 13 to 19 year olds: A Vision for 2006". Of the 13 Connexions partnerships on which Ofsted has so far reported, one was judged very good, eight good, one satisfactory and three unsatisfactory. Youth services have made encouraging progress in implementing the Transforming Youth Work modernisation programme. Connexions partnerships are actively involving young people in the governance, design, delivery and evaluation of the Connexions Service; and in promoting active citizenship and personal development through Millennium Volunteers, the Neighbourhood Support Fund and activity-based programmes. The Connexions Customer Satisfaction Survey shows that 91 per cent. of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the service. Connexions Personal Advisers are working with young people to engage parents, carers and teachers, supported by a guidance leaflet.

Contact Centres

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he will announce the allocation of funds to new contact centres following the publication of "Making Contact Work". [163759]

Margaret Hodge: I announced on 19 March that £3.5 million was being made available to March 2006, from a DfES/Sure Start Joint Investment Fund, for child contact services. Just under £2.3 million of this money will fund 14 new supervised child contact centres. £130,000 is being made available to Coram Family to provide high quality training to the new centres; £200,000 will provide continued funding for the NCH Contact Matters Pilot Project in Durham; £387,000 will fund the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC) Change Programme whereby it moves its membership from affiliated to accredited status; and £75,000 is being set aside for research into child contact services. We are also making £430,000 available for a 'Sustainability Fund' to support, over the next two years, existing NACCC-member child contact centres in England. The funding will be administered by NACCC and details about how to apply will be announced in July at NACCC's Annual Conference.

E-universities

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made with the e-university project; how much money has been allocated to the project in each financial year since 2000–01; how the project is being co-ordinated; and if he will make a statement. [163538]

Alan Johnson: The e-universities project has been overseen from the outset by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in partnership with other funding bodies and the UK higher education sector. HEFCE arranged for public investment in an Operating Company, UK eUniversities Worldwide (UKeU) to be handled by a Holding Company (the eLearning Holding Company Ltd.) which is owned collectively by the higher education sector. The Government has provided £62 million to HEFCE for the e-universities project and I understand that HEFCE has passed on £32.6 million to date to the Holding Company for investment in UKeU. By year, this breaks down as: 2001–02, £12.8 million; 2002–03, £15.7 million; 2003–04, £4.1 million. In addition, HEFCE has allocated £7 million to public good activities connected with online learning, including the eChina project and the establishment of a new e-Learning research centre. HEFCE is currently holding restructuring discussions with the boards of UKeU and the Holding Company to consider the future business direction and structure of UKeU in order to identify the best way forward to secure value from the venture for the higher education sector.

Early Years Development

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will publish the representations he has received from the National Day Nurseries Association on the financial viability of the operation of the nursery education grant scheme for three and four-year-olds by private providers; and if he will make a statement. [162867]

Margaret Hodge: We have not received any specific representations from NDNA on this issue. The Nursery Education Grant scheme ended in March 2003. With effect from April 2003, all funding for free early education places, including those delivered by private providers, was consolidated within the general Education Formula Spending (EFS) arrangements.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pre-school places were available in each year since 1997 in *(a)* the state sector and *(b)* the private sector. [163137]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the form requested.

Figures on the number of free nursery education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in England are shown in the table.

Number of free nursery education places taken up by three and four-year-old children in maintained nursery and primary schools and private, voluntary and independent providers—England—1997–2003

Position in January each year

	Three-year-olds		*Four-year-olds*		
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[1]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*[2]	*Maintained nursery and primary schools*[3]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*[4]	*Total four-year-olds*[5]
1997	214,200	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—	576,200
1998	222,000	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—	591,500
1999	225,700	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—	593,800
2000	229,900	40,300	[6]—	[6]—	598,500
2001	226,600	108,800	[6]—	[6]—	589,300
2002	223,500	184,700	477,700	106,800	584,500
2003	218,700	226,100	472,200	107,100	579,300

[1] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[2] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data.

[3] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[4] Information for 2002 was derived from the Nursery Education Grant exercise and information for 2003 from the Early Years Supplementary data collection exercise.

[5] Information prior to 2002 was derived from the Nursery Education Grant exercise. Information for 2002 combines two sources of information, the Annual Schools' Census and the Nursery Education Grant exercise. Information for 2003 combines Annual Schools' Census and the Early Years Supplementary data collection exercise.

[6] Not available.

The latest figures on provision for three and four-year-olds in England were published in a Statistical Bulletin 'Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2003' which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

We have made the commitment that by April 2004, six months ahead of our original target, all three-year-olds in England whose parents want one, will have access to a free, part-time early education place.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pre-school child care places have been created in deprived areas in each year since 1997. [163139]

Margaret Hodge: Separate information on child care growth in disadvantaged wards has been collected centrally only from April 2003. Between April and December 2003, the latest available data, 12,800 new child care places were created in pre-school groups located in the 20 per cent. most disadvantaged wards in England. During the same period 2,500 group child care places closed in these wards, so that the stock of group child care places rose by some 10,300 places. Information on child minder places is not broken down by the age of the child. Between April and December 2003, 12,100 places with child minders opened in the 20 per cent. most disadvantaged wards in England and 6,100 such places closed, so that the stock of child minder places in these wards rose by some 6,000 places.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the overall operating and running costs, including employee salaries, of each Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership in each local education authority were, in each year since 1998. [163142]

Margaret Hodge: It has been the responsibility of the local authority to convene an Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership within guidelines set out in the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership Planning Guidance 2001–2002 published by the then Department for Education and Employment in 2001. The costs of establishing and running those partnerships were not set by Government.

Education Funding

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average Government investment per student within *(a)* primary, *(b)* secondary, *(c)* higher and *(d)* further education was in each of the last five years. [159428]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 10 March 2004]:* The available information on funding per pupil or per student is shown in the table.

Funding per full-time equivalent pupil/student

£

	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*[1]	*2002–03*[2]
Unit funding per FTE pupil					
Primary (aged 3–10)	2,420	2,570	2,770	2,930	3,010
Secondary (aged 11–15)	3,260	3,370	3,620	3,810	3,900
Unit funding per FTE student					
Further education (total funding)	3,420	3,650	3,850	4,000	4,020
Higher education	5,200	5,190	5,130	5,170	5,170

[1] Provisional figure (FE)
[2] Planned/provisional figures
Note:
Figures are in real terms adjusted to 2002–03 prices using June 2003 GDP deflators.

The FE and HE figures are consistent with those published in the "Statistics of Education, Education and Training Expenditure since 1993–94; Statistical Bulletin (04/03)". The primary and secondary figures differ from those in the bulletin in that they only include funding which can be apportioned to those sectors.

The basis of the figures in each case is set out in the Expenditure Bulletin. Next month, our departmental report for 2004 will be published and this will include updated tables for the unit funding for the schools, further and higher education sectors.

Further Education Colleges

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to discuss with the Learning and Skills Councils guidelines for dealing with further education colleges withdrawing provision in their areas. [162109]

Alan Johnson: Local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) work with providers to develop provision that meets the needs of learners, employers and the local community. This is part of the LSC's planning process. As part of this process, local LSC-led Strategic Area Reviews are taking place across the country to assess the pattern of provision in every local area and consider how it should be planned to ensure that local needs and priorities are met. Guidance on these reviews is set out in the LSC Circular 03/06—Strategic Area Reviews. A copy of which has been placed in the Library.

In addition, officials from the Department, the LSC and the Association of Colleges will be considering jointly whether further guidance is needed on the respective roles, responsibilities and powers of the Department, National and local LSCs and colleges in the relation to the provision of education and training post-16 in a local area, including decisions about reshaping or withdrawing it.

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of students leaving each further education college in London in each of the last five years left without a qualification. [163521]

Alan Johnson: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Mark Haysom the Council's Chief Executive will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Kids Club Network (Funding)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what Government funding has been provided to the Kids' Club Network 4 Children, in each of the last three years for which information is available. [162198]

Margaret Hodge: Over the past three years, 4 Children formerly Kids' Clubs Network has received the following funding:

(£000)

	Department for Education and Skills	*Phoenix Fund (DTI)*
To 31 March 2001	303,144	22,700
To 31 March 2002	593,260	48,546
To 31 March 2003	1,031,124	39,810
Sport England income		
2000–01	30,000	
2001–02	66,504	
2002–03	128,118	

4 Children was also responsible for administering payments totalling an additional £1,028,344 on behalf of Sport England in 2001–2002.

Department of Health

	£000
2000–01	0
2001–02	30,000
2002–03	0

Local Government Finance

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance he gives to local education authorities on the sources of funds or budgets they should use to make up for the cut in the Standards Fund in order to continue school drug adviser posts; and if he will make a statement. [163994]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The cessation of the Standards Fund Grant for drug prevention was announced in December 2002. Since then, the Department has advised local education authorities (LEAs) and schools to fund support for drug education out of the total resources available to them. It is up to individual LEAs to decide whether this support includes the provision of school drug advisors.

Mature Students

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of students in *(a)* the North East of England, *(b)* England and Wales and *(c)* UK universities have been mature students in each of the last 15 years. [150627]

Alan Johnson: The proportions of undergraduate enrolments from mature students are given in the table.

Proportion of undergraduate enrolments who were mature students by location of HE institution

Percentage

Academic Year	*North East*[1,2]	*England and Wales*[1]	*GB*
1988–89	[3]—	n/a	56
1989–90	[3]—	n/a	56
1990–91	[3]—	n/a	56
1991–92	[3]—	n/a	56
1992–93	[3]—	n/a	57
1993–94	[3]—	n/a	58
1994–95	52	61	60
1995–96	55	63	62
1996–97	57	63	62
1997–98	55	62	61
1998–99	53	61	60
1999–2000	53	60	59
2000–01	55	60	59
2001–02	54	60	60
2002–03	55	61	60

[1] Data are not available for English and Welsh institutions and North East Institutions for years prior to 1993–94

[2] Figures for North East institutions for 1994–95 and 1995–96 do not include those studying HE in FE institutions as the data is not available.

[3] Not available

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency, Learning Skills Council, Universities Statistical Record.

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will rank universities by their proportion of mature students in *(a)* the North East of England, *(b)* England and Wales and *(c)* the UK. [150628]

Alan Johnson: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

National Childcare Strategy (Burton)

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have benefited from the National Childcare Strategy in the Burton constituency; and if he will make a statement. [161851]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the number of new childcare places created in an individual constituency is available only from 1999. Staffordshire local authority reported that between April 1999 and December 2003, the latest date for which information is currently available, 1,498 new childcare places opened in Burton constituency. A place typically helps more than one child, as not all children take up places full-time, and we estimate these places will help some 2,800 children. During the same period, Staffordshire reported that 315 childcare places closed in Burton, so that the stock of childcare places rose by 1,183 helping some 2,300 children.

Pre-school Education (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many free *(a)* nursery and *(b)* pre-school places were available for (i) three and (ii) four year olds in Crosby in each of the last seven years. [160399]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the form requested.

Figures on the number of free nursery education places taken up by three and four year olds in Sefton local education authority area are shown in the table.

The latest figures on provision for three and four year olds in England were published in a Statistical Bulletin Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2003' which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsqateway/.

By April 2004, six months ahead of our original target, all three year olds in England whose parents want one, will have access to a free, part-time early education place.

Number of free nursery education places[1,2,3] taken up by three and four year old children Sefton Local Education Authority area

1997–2003

Position in January each year

	Three year olds	*Four year olds*
1997	2,100	3,200
1998	2,000	3,300
1999	2,100	3,200
2000	2,400	3,100
2001	2,900	3,200
2002	2,700	3,200
2003	2,700	3,000

1. Part-time equivalent number of free nursery education places taken up by three and four year old children.

2. A free nursery education place comprises five two and a half hour sessions of early years education per week, for thirty-three weeks of the year, usually three terms of eleven weeks.

3. Maintained nursery and primary schools and private, voluntary and independent providers.

School Playing Fields

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will strengthen the guidance on the disposal of playing fields; and if he will make a statement. [163662]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 was introduced on 1 October 1998 to stop the indiscriminate sale of school playing fields that occurred in the 1980s and early to mid 1990s. During this time there was widespread concern at the unrestricted sale of school playing fields. If a local authority wanted to sell a school playing field there was nothing to stop it and it could spend the proceeds as it wished. Local authorities and governing bodies of all maintained schools now need the Secretary of State's consent before they can dispose of a playing field or any part of a playing field. Applications to sell school playing fields are only approved where it is clear that they meet the needs of local schools and their communities and that any proceeds are used to improve school sports provision or education facilities. We are continuing to keep the guidance, which was last revised in July 2001, under review.

Science Strategy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he has taken to enhance science in his Department since the publication of the Government's science strategy Investing in Innovation. [162242]

Alan Johnson: The Department is committed to undertaking and using the results of science to help it achieve its objectives as set out in the Department's statement in the "Forward Look of Government Funded Science, Engineering and Technology—2003". Funding for research specifically will increase from £9.1m in 2003–4 to £16.2m in 2004–5.

The Department remains committed to the use of social researchers, economists and statisticians to advise in the development, delivery and evaluation of education and skills policies and they are also deployed as "intelligent customers" for research commissioned from the wider research community. We have made substantial progress for improving the impact of science on policy.

To this end the Department has recently implemented a new process for the identification and prioritisation of research, involving senior policy makers within the Department and external experts to enhance the transfer of knowledge."

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what budget for special education needs provision has been allocated to mainstream schools in Stroud for pupils with moderate learning difficulties since the announcement to close Bownham Park special school. [162741]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the funding by local education authorities to individual schools for particular types of special educational need is not collected centrally.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost of educating children with special educational needs is for *(a)* each local education authority and *(b)* England for 2003–04; what the proportion of total education spending is planned to be spent on special educational needs in that year; and what proportion of the school age population has special educational needs. [158277]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 2 March 2004]:* In 2003, 17 per cent. of pupils were recorded as having special educational needs. The rest of the information requested is contained in tables, copies of which have been placed in the Libraries.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost is of providing special needs education in *(a)* mainstream and *(b)* special schools in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough in 2003–04; and what percentage this forms of the total education budget of (A) Greater London and (B) each London borough. [158458]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is contained within the following table.

Total estimated gross expenditure on providing special needs education in mainstream and special schools in Greater London for 2003–04

	SEN element of schools budget, Primary and Secondary	Special	SEN element of LEA budget	Total
Inner London:				
City of London	85,457	151,500	24,600	261,557
Camden	9,306,831	5,785,007	2,073,632	17,165,470
Hackney	10,423,357	6,885,300	1,207,140	18,515,797
Hammersmith and Fulham	2,666,562	6,758,033	990,136	10,414,731
Islington	7,610,363	7,690,423	1,117,401	16,418,187
Kensington and Chelsea	2,388,011	4,717,502	899,021	8,004,534
Lambeth	11,966,109	10,160,086	1,299,930	23,426,125
Lewisham	11,808,532	11,663,560	914,614	24,386,706
Southwark	11,185,865	8,286,900	2,471,458	21,944,223
Tower Hamlets	14,995,771	9,267,744	1,879,129	26,142,644
Wandsworth	6,981,744	16,817,777	1,494,927	25,294,448
Westminster	6,892,838	1,824,000	1,292,800	10,009,638
Haringey	9,106,910	11,155,544	2,456,282	22,718,736
Newham	20,854,525	5,015,471	1,766,800	27,636,796
Inner London total	126,272,875	106,178,847	19,887,870	252,339,592
Outer London:				
Greenwich	9,258,759	11,681,280	2,625,952	23,565,991
Barking and Dagenham	5,418,470	5,283,102	1,038,157	11,739,729
Barnet	16,459,686	12,124,990	2,051,850	30,636,526
Bexley	10,607,857	8,531,000	1,151,000	20,289,857
Brent	7,847,819	8,641,000	1,658,000	18,146,819
Bromley	10,662,688	10,683,854	1,324,771	22,671,313
Croydon	9,466,437	14,212,729	1,671,706	25,350,872
Ealing	9,004,219	10,946,500	1,766,200	21,716,919
Enfield	8,835,435	10,834,544	2,215,038	21,885,017
Harrow	10,200,223	3,774,539	1,239,907	15,214,669
Havering	5,306,647	4,209,403	1,125,373	10,641,423
Hillingdon	8,273,736	11,187,386	1,490,299	20,951,421
Hounslow	9,421,100	8,693,654	1,503,933	19,618,687
Kingston upon Thames	4,493,785	5,160,538	1,051,638	10,705,961
Merton	6,470,177	5,270,389	1,054,387	12,794,953
Redbridge	4,745,086	9,649,111	2,041,380	16,435,577
Richmond Upon Thames	4,670,219	4,291,500	837,100	9,798,819
Sutton	8,479,612	6,570,501	1,146,591	16,196,704
Waltham Forest	6,593,986	14,293,017	497,728	21,384,731
Outer London	156,215,940	166,039,037	27,491,010	349,745,987
Greater London	282,488,815	272,217,884	47,378,880	602,085,579

	Total education revenue expenditure	Percentage of total education revenue expenditure to be spent on special educational needs: Primary and Secondary	Special	SEN element of LEA budget	Total
Inner London:					
City of London	3,606,300	2	4	1	7
Camden	143,819,230	6	4	1	12
Hackney	153,423,350	7	4	1	12
Hammersmith and Fulham	101,251,393	3	7	1	10
Islington	145,931,890	5	5	1	11
Kensington and Chelsea	75,370,041	3	6	1	11
Lambeth	181,184,491	7	6	1	13
Lewisham	199,391,026	6	6	0	12
Southwark	193,491,728	6	4	1	11
Tower Hamlets	222,925,454	7	4	1	12
Wandsworth	149,860,841	5	11	1	17
Westminster	118,531,901	6	2	1	8
Haringey	173,403,357	5	6	1	13
Newham	238,566,703	9	2	1	12
Inner London total	2,100,757,705	6	5	1	12
Outer London:					
Greenwich	182,248,538	5	6	1	13
Barking and Dagenham	132,276,243	4	4	1	9
Barnet	202,317,600	8	6	1	15
Bexley	153,060,000	7	6	1	13

	Total education revenue expenditure	Percentage of total education revenue expenditure to be spent on special educational needs: Primary and Secondary	Special	SEN element of LEA budget	Total
Brent	179,607,000	4	5	1	10
Bromley	175,928,289	6	6	1	13
Croydon	222,125,992	4	6	1	11
Ealing	189,317,900	5	6	1	11
Enfield	211,582,891	4	5	1	10
Harrow	129,232,854	8	3	1	12
Havering	144,209,158	4	3	1	7
Hillingdon	174,913,589	5	6	1	12
Hounslow	162,807,476	6	5	1	12
Kingston upon Thames	85,012,894	5	6	1	13
Merton	94,786,950	7	6	1	13
Redbridge	177,491,996	3	5	1	9
Richmond Upon Thames	80,250,200	6	5	1	12
Sutton	124,653,054	7	5	1	13
Waltham Forest	173,245,154	4	8	0	12
Outer London	2,995,067,778	5	6	1	12
Greater London	5,095,825,483	6	5	1	12

Notes:
1. Estimated gross expenditure, rather than net expenditure, is given as income cannot be split between nursery, mainstream and special schools.
2. Financial data are taken from LEAs 2003–04 Section 52 Budget statements submitted to the DfES.
3. The SEN element of the schools budget includes the provision for pupils with statements, specialist report for statemented and non-statemented pupils, fees for pupils at independent special schools and abroad and collaboration and integration.
4. The SEN element of the LEA budget includes educational psychology service/assessments and statementing, LEA functions in relation to child protection, health service partnerships/special medical attention, parent partnership, guidance and information and promoting good practice and collaboration. Figures are at LEA level rather than school level and consequently cannot be allocated to phase of education.

Student Loans

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to his answer of 5 February 2004 reference number 151860, what proportion of graduates the model assumed would have debts on graduation due to *(a)* maintenance loans, *(b)* fee loans and *(c)* fee and maintenance loans combined, broken down by bands of £1,000. [154379]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* Of those students entering higher education after 2006, our modelling for the RIA assumed broadly that *(a)* 85 per cent. would leave HE with a debt based on maintenance loans, *(b)* 80 per cent. would leave with debt based on loans for fees, and *(c)* around 70 per cent. would leave with debt for both maintenance and fee loans combined.

The distribution of the level of debt—especially broken down into narrow ranges—is not an explicit output of the model. Moreover, it will not be static as it will depend on a number of factors and assumptions which change over time, such as: parental income, value of loans available; and the interaction of other model assumptions, including course length and whether a student completes their course.

We estimate, using the assumptions in the Regulatory Impact Assessment, and figures for the expected average debt for 2002–03, that the average debt of students starting in 2006 will be around £15,000.

Sure Start

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his policy is on Sure Start; and what staffing resources have been allocated to implement Sure Start in Somerset in 2003–04. [161864]

Margaret Hodge: Sure Start is a vital part of our commitment to achieve better outcomes for all children. The Chancellor, in his budget speech, restated that commitment when he announced £669 million additional funding for Sure Start by 2007–08 which will pay for children's centres in all of the 20 per cent. most disadvantaged wards in England by 2007–08; 100,000 new childcare places, some of which will be to support nursery education places and a pilot to extend a free part-time early education place to 6,000 two years olds in disadvantaged areas.

£2.551 million has been allocated to Somerset for general Sure Start grant activities in 2003–04.

A further £2.244 million has been allocated to three Sure Start Local Programmes and two Mini Local Programmes in Somerset for 2003–04 (although this funding is controlled by the programmes rather than the local authority). The Department does not collect information on how this funding is allocated to meet staffing requirements.

In addition, the three Sure Start Local Programmes have a maximum capital allocation of £3.325 million. This funding is for use during the first three years of a programme's life. The Mini Sure Start in Chard also has an approved capital allocation of £250,000.

Somerset is also developing 363 new full time child care places across the county through the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative. Total revenue grant allocated for 2003–04 is approximately £455,000.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the merits of Sure Start centres offering a facility for *(a)* consumer and *(b)* financial advice; and if he will meet the Consumers' Association to discuss the matter. [163361]

Margaret Hodge: Sure Start local programmes and children's centres are required to provide services which deliver the Sure Start Unit's PSA targets, including a target to reduce the number of children in workless households. Services are expected to be based on evidence of what works. Consumer and financial advice, including advice on in-work benefits for example, is already provided by many Sure Start local programmes and this will also be the case in children's centres.

I would be happy to consider a request for a meeting with the Consumers' Association and suggest they contact my office with a possible agenda.

Telephone Tapping

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what consultation his Department has had with higher education institutions about the tapping of the telephone conversations and e-mails of foreign students; and if he will make a statement. [163675]

Alan Johnson: None.

Universities (Work Experience)

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if his Department will encourage universities to offer credits for work experience on university courses. [163417]

Alan Johnson: The use of credit systems is a matter for higher education institutions. However, in the White Paper, "The future of higher education", we asked the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to work with partners in the sector to build upon the best current practice, and to scale this up so that there is widespread and consistent use of credit across higher education. The work is being taken forward as part of a wider exercise to review systems for measuring and recording student achievement, initially through a scoping group chaired by Professor Bob Burgess, VC at the University of Leicester. Professor Burgess is expected to report with recommendations for future action during the summer. More specifically on work experience, the newly introduced two-year foundation degrees combine academic study with work based learning, with the work based element forming part of the overall assessment toward the final award. Employers are actively involved in the design and review of courses to ensure that students are gaining a HE qualification that is relevant to employment in their chosen area.

University Science Departments

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if he will list the university science departments that have run *(a)* with a deficit and *(b)* in credit over each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement; [163992]

(2) what action he is planning to support university science departments that are running with a deficit. [163993]

Alan Johnson: Higher education institutions are required to prepare audited financial statements each year. Those statements do not, however, record income and expenditure at the level of individual departments within the institution. Details are not, therefore, available.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) takes account of the additional costs of science subjects as part of its funding methodology. The funding it pays to institutions is, however, provided as a block grant and it is for the individual institutions to determine the levels at which to fund their departments based on the funding from HEFCE and their other income.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Coastal Defence

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what forecasts have been made for funding allocations for the coastal defence budget for the next 10 years. [163575]

Mr. Morley: Total provision for Central Government funding to the flood and coastal defence operating authorities (Environment Agency (EA), local authorities (LAs) and internal drainage boards (IDBs)) for maintenance and improvement of defences against flooding, both coastal and otherwise, and coastal erosion is £467 million in 2004–05 and £539 million in 2005–06.

The operating authorities decide how best to invest this money within the constraints of Defra's funding criteria so funds are not specifically set aside for coastal defences as such. I hope to reserve allocations within the overall 2005–06 figure for the EA, LAs for coast protection, LAs for flood defence and IDBs in October following analysis of operating authority forward plans.

Funding to 2007–08 will be considered in this year's Spending Review. Longer-term funding needs are being considered as part of Defra's "National Assessment of Defence Needs and Costs" and I hope to be in a position to publish findings in the summer.

Conferences/Seminars

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans were made by her Department for conferences and seminars in conjunction with its consultation on the draft UK National Allocation Plan for the EU Emissions Trading Scheme; what the total cost of organising each of those events was; and how many people attended in each case. [161393]

Mr. Morley: Defra has held three general consultation seminars, the costs and attendances are as follows.

Date	Cost (£000)	Attendance
16 June 2003	3,500	180
10 September 2003	12,000	250
28 January 2004	7,000	450

DTI have also held sector specific meetings with industry to discuss aspects of the consultation.

Disposable Nappies

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how long it takes for disposable nappies to decompose in landfill sites; and what percentage of the waste going to landfill this represents; [161667]

(2) what steps she will take to reduce the environmental impact of the disposal of disposable nappies; [161668]

(3) what restrictions are placed on waste disposal authorities in relation to the disposal in landfill sites of raw sewage from *(a)* disposable nappies and *(b)* other sources; [161669]

(4) what estimate she has made of the total number of disposable nappies that entered the household waste stream in 2003; and what percentage of household waste this constituted. [161670]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* Disposable nappies consist of fluffed pulp, the largest component, and plastic. They also contain absorbent gel. The rate of breakdown will depend on the conditions of landfill and the other types of waste deposited. Generally landfill sites in the UK have a high moisture and organic content and therefore waste, including the paper and gel parts of nappies, will degrade relatively quickly.

Plastics are generally resistant to degradation and, depending on the type, some will take years to breakdown, others may last indefinitely.

The Strategy Unit in its report 'Waste Not Want Not' estimated that in 2000–01 nappies comprised around 2 per cent. of household waste, equivalent to 350,000 tonnes.

Nappies from the home are classed as household waste and can be disposed of in the normal household waste. Properly regulated landfill is a proven method of dealing with waste safely and can be relied on if alternative methods of dealing with waste are not provided. Our view is that good waste management practice adequately regulated can and does cope with disposable nappies.

Following the publication of the Strategy Unit report 'Waste Not Want Not' the Government accepted the recommendation that the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) should take forward (as part of an overall waste minimisation initiative) work on supporting re-usable nappies through the provision of support for new businesses and information to parents. The details of the programme are still being worked up.

The aim of the WRAP programme is to achieve an average diversion of 225kg/yr per participating household. WRAP'S target is to convert 155,000 households to re-usable nappies by end of fiscal year 2006. This is an ambitious target and if achieved would create a reduction in household waste of 35,000 tonnes (per annum).

Drinking Water Quality

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the net environmental effect that would flow from tightening drinking water standards further, with particular reference to energy consumption by water companies. [163055]

Mr. Morley: The standards for wholesomeness included in the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2000 are based on those set out in the 1998 EC Directive on the quality of water intended for human consumption (98/83/EC). These in turn reflect the current World Health Organisation guideline values for drinking water quality. The WHO has published a third edition of its draft guidelines which the European Commission has considered as part of a review of standards, as required by the Directive, in the light of scientific and technical progress.

The process of reviewing the Directive started during October 2003 when the European Commission held a seminar. It has indicated that there is unlikely to be significant changes to the current standards during next five years and that any changes that might be adopted would be unlikely to come into force before 2010. The Government considers that it is not possible to consider provision for costs associated with possible changes to water quality standards within the 2004 periodic review of water prices.

Drinking water standards apply generally at consumers' taps. Environmental standards are set independently to protect the environment, for example, the environmental quality standards that are set to protect aquatic organisms and ecosystems are applied in the water body.

If, in the light of scientific and technical progress, the EC were to agree to more stringent drinking water quality standards in the future, the normal requirements to consult and to prepare impact assessments would apply to any proposed new regulatory standards. The costs of meeting such tighter standards would also be taken into account in the periodic review of water prices.

Emissions Trading

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will change her policy so as to co-ordinate the implementation of the national allocation plan of the Emissions Trading Scheme to include the British Ceramic Confederation in respect of the ceramics sector. [160232]

Mr. Morley: Government have consulted UK industry at each stage of the implementation process of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme and the development of the National Allocation Plan. The British Ceramic Confederation has informed officials of problems with some of the data submitted for the draft National Allocation Plan. Data are being resubmitted and corrected information will be used for the list of installation-level allocations to be published in June.

Furthermore, the British Ceramic Confederation have been involved throughout our on-going consultation with industry, and representatives were present at a meeting held between Defra and DTI officials and the ceramics sector on 16 February 2004. Officials are taking the issues raised by stakeholders seriously and are currently working on how to revise the proposals set out in the draft National Allocation Plan to address these and other concerns raised by stakeholders. Work on these issues and on other points raised in formal responses to the consultation will continue over the coming weeks.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made towards incorporating the Clean Development Mechanism and the Joint Implementation of Reduction Aims in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [160877]

Mr. Morley: The Commission has proposed an amendment to the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) which links the EU ETS to the Kyoto Project Mechanisms, Joint Implementation (JI) and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

The Linking Directive is currently being negotiated and we expect a first reading deal in April . The UK supports early agreement on this directive and we expect that once concluded the Amendment Directive will provide a mechanism for the use of credits from CDM and JI projects by operators within the EU ETS as soon as these projects become available.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what mechanisms she expects to put in place to ensure that the self-monitoring of installations participating in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme is not undermined by fraud. [160878]

Mr. Morley: The European Commission have published guidance for the monitoring and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions. Installations covered by the EU Emissions Trading Scheme in the UK are required to submit monitoring and reporting plans to the regulators who will be assessing these in accordance with the Commission Guidelines. This will ensure that all installations within a sector are monitoring and reporting their data according to the same protocol.

In addition to this, baseline emissions data and annual emissions reports will be verified by independent verifiers and this should minimise the risk of false or misleading information being submitted.

Finally, the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading Scheme Regulations 2003 also contain provisions making it an offence to provide, deliberately or recklessly, false or misleading information in various situations, such as for the purpose of obtaining an emissions permit. These provisions should again reduce the risk of fraud.

Similar provisions are having to be put in place in other countries participating in the scheme.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of the 20 per cent. cut in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010 she expects to be achieved through the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [160879]

Mr. Morley: The Government are firmly committed to its domestic goal of moving towards a 20 per cent. reduction in CO_2 emissions below 1990 levels by 2010. The Climate Change Programme published in 2000 identifies policies that were expected to achieve reductions of 17.75 MtC which would amount to a reduction of 19 per cent. on 1990 levels.

The Government proposed in the draft National Allocation Plan published for consultation in January that the cap on emissions for the first phase of the scheme should be derived from the projections of emissions for policies already in place for the industry sectors concerned. The sector cap proposed for the electricity supply industry has been reduced by 0.75 MtC to contribute towards further reductions in line with the plans in the Climate Change Programme for reductions from emission trading. This was consistent with an overall reduction of 16.3 per cent. by 2010.

In determining the cap for the second phase of the scheme from 2008 to 2012, the Government will ensure that installations covered by the scheme make an appropriate contribution to that goal. This issue will be considered further in the review of the UK Climate Change Programme which will take place later in 2004.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the ability of EU accession countries to participate in the EU emissions trading scheme. [160882]

Mr. Morley: The UK and other member states have worked with the European Commission through a series of workshops in accession countries to discuss the implementation of the EU emissions trading scheme. The Commission regularly reviews the progress of all member states and accession countries in implementing the scheme. The latest assessment suggests that most are on course to participate in the scheme from next year.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the monitoring of emissions from installations participating in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme situated in the accession countries. [160883]

Mr. Morley: The European Commission has held workshops in eight out of 10 capitals of the acceding countries in order to explain the Directive and the steps needed to implement it. These workshops covered monitoring, reporting and verification; allocation; registries and implementing legislation. Another series of workshops are being held throughout the EU focussing on national allocation plans.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what additional resources will be made available to the Environment Agency to help it fulfil its responsibilities under the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [160884]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency has taken on additional staff to manage the responsibilities that it will have as a regulator for the purposes of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. The Agency agrees its priorities with the Department during the annual corporate planning process and allocates its funds accordingly.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* current and *(b)* prospective EU member states have approached her Department for advice on the drafting of national allocation plans. [160881]

Mr. Morley: The UK published its draft National Allocation Plan for the EU Emissions Trading Scheme for consultation in January. Government officials have discussed the proposals with representatives of all EU Member States and Accession Countries at meetings organised by the European Commission to discuss the implementation of the scheme. The draft National Allocation Plan is available on the Defra website and we are aware that many Member States have reviewed the detail of our approach to the Plan.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff were involved in drafting the National Allocation Plan. [160885]

Mr. Morley: The development and drafting of the National Allocation Plan has involved more than forty staff from Defra, DTI and the Devolved Administrations, with significant contributions from other departments including HM Treasury and Ofgem.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* cost so far and *(b)* projected total cost of producing the National Allocation Plan is. [160886]

Mr. Morley: The cost to date to Defra and DTI has been in the order of £1.3 million including wages, seminars and consultants fees.

Fly-tipping

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the Environment Agency spent in each year from 1999 to 2003 on staff costs to *(a)* detect and *(b)* prosecute fly-tippers. [156521]

Mr. Morley: Staff costs relating to fly-tipping are not readily available. The Environment Agency spends around £12 million a year on waste-related enforcement activity. The activity relates directly to prosecutions, cautions and elements of notices. This is around 3 per cent. of the Agency's regulatory budget.

Gamma Interferon Test

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total spending was on gamma interferon development and trials in each of the last five financial years. [158364]

Mr. Bradshaw: Expenditure on gamma-interferon associated research since 1999 is summarised as follows.

£000

	Expenditure				
	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Expenditure on research projects on gamma-interferon	170	256	209	134	[1]145
Expenditure on other research projects contributing to development of gamma-interferon as a diagnostic test	664	1,522	1,451	2,506	[1]2,861

[1] Estimate.

In addition the gamma-interferon field pilot, which began in November 2002, is expected to cost £667,000 over two years.

Home Energy Efficiency Scheme

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many homes in Crosby have benefited from the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme. [160569]

Mr. Morley: The Home Energy Efficiency Scheme is now marketed as Warm Front. Between the launch of the scheme in June 2000 and the end of December 2003, approximately 1,800 households in Crosby received assistance from the Scheme.

Ivory

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she has raised the issue of regulation of the domestic ivory market with the Governments of *(a)* the People's Republic of China, *(b)* Japan, *(c)* Myanmar and *(d)* Vietnam. [156757]

Mr. Morley: I have discussed this in China and Japan. I am aware, of concerns about the regulation of domestic ivory markets in a number of Asian countries. At the last Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in Santiago in November 2002, the Secretariat was directed to assess controls on the internal ivory trade in a number of countries, including China and Japan. Their initial findings will be considered at the CITES Standing Committee meeting later this month, including recommendations for early verification visits by the Secretariat to both China and Japan.

Large Combustion Plants Directive

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether in the event that the Government choose to implement the large combustion plants directive (LCPD) through a national plan approach her Department will seek amendments to the Integrated Pollution Preventative and Control (IPPC) Directive to allow emission limits to be met via the trading of S02, NOx and dust emission allowances in place of the IPPC's existing requirements to meet the LCPD's emission limit values. [162403]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 23 March 2004]:* The LCPD applies without prejudice to the IPPC Directive. That means that large combustion plants subject to the IPPC Directive will each have emission limit values (ELVs) set on the basis of the application of best available techniques (BAT) for dealing with pollution. Those ELVs may thus be tighter than those set in the LCPD but cannot be less stringent.

In its response[1] to a June 2003 communication on IPPC from the European Commission, the Government urged a further amendment of the IPPC Directive, along the lines of that already advanced in the "Emissions Trading" Directive[2], to facilitate greater potential for emissions trading for other pollutants.

[1] Available at http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/ppc/cipp.htm .

[2] Directive 2003/87/EC establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the community and amending Council Directive 96/61/EC.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the emission limit values under the large combustion plants directive apply to existing coal-fired power stations operating under a National Emission Reduction Plan. [162404]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 23 March 2004]:* If the option chosen to implement the revised large combustion plants directive for combustion plants with a rated thermal input equal or greater than 50MW and licensed before 1 July 1987 ('existing' plants) is a National Emission Reduction Plan, these plants would not be subject to the emission limit values specified in the directive. However, the total emissions of all 'existing' plants in the UK would be limited to a pre-determined level (a 'bubble'). The size of the 'bubble' for each pollutant (sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and dust) would be calculated as the sum of the emissions when the emission limit values are applied to each existing plant, averaged over the 5-year period 1996 to 2000. This is explained in more detail in chapter three of the Department's Consultation Paper on the implementation of the revised large combustion plant directive published in June 2003.

Marine Conservation

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish a draft Marine Conservation Bill. [162218]

Mr. Morley: A number of reviews are currently examining whether new arrangements, including new legislation, are required to deliver the Government's vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. In particular, the Review of Marine Nature Conservation is looking at the adequacy of existing mechanisms for protecting the marine environment. The Government will take a decision on whether new legislation is needed once it has seen the recommendations from these reviews.

Parish/Town Councils

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list parish and town councils *(a)* which have been granted QUALITY Status, broken down by county area and *(b)* whose status is being assessed. [162828]

Alun Michael: I am very pleased at the extent of engagement of parish and town councils with achieving QUALITY status.

There are approximately 500 clerks currently registered with their County Training Partnership (CTP) to undertake the Certificate in Local Council Administration. Town and parish councils whose clerks are currently taking the qualification are likely to apply for Quality Status once the clerk has secured it, probably within the coming 12 months.

The information requested is as follows:

(a) The 40 parish and town councils that have been granted Quality Status are (by county area):

Name of council	*County*
Weston-super-Mare Town Council	Avon
Keynsham Town Council	Avon
Leighton Linslade Town Council	Bedfordshire
Buckingham Town Council	Buckinghamshire
Huntingdon Town Council	Cambridgeshire
Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council	Cambridgeshire
Poynton Parish Council	Cheshire
Ivybridge Town Council	Devon
Cullompton Town Council	Devon
Stokenham Parish Council	Devon
Tavistock Town Council	Devon
Exmouth Town Council	Devon
Kingsbridge Town Council	Devon
St. Osyth Parish Council	Essex
Great Baddow Town Council	Essex
Witham Town Council	Essex
Loughton Town Council	Essex
Maldon Town Council	Essex
Wivenhoe Town Council	Essex
Headley Parish Council	Hampshire
Brading Town Council	Isle of Wight
Wootton Bridge Parish Council	Isle of Wight
Edenbridge Town Council	Kent
Asfordby Parish Council	Leicestershire and Rutland
Halewood Town Council	Merseyside
Carterton Town Council	Oxfordshire
Lawley and Overdale Parish Council	Shropshire
Oswestry Town Council	Shropshire
Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council	Shropshire
Sudbury Town Council	Suffolk
Seaford Town Council	Sussex
Hurstpierpoint Sayers Common Parish Council	Sussex
Burgess Hill Town Council	Sussex
East Grinstead Town Council	Sussex
Cuckfield Parish Council	Sussex
Crowborough Town Council	Sussex
Whitnash Town Council	Warwickshire and West Midlands
Curdworth Parish Council	Warwickshire and West Midlands
Melksham Without Parish Council	Wiltshire
Calne Town Council	Wiltshire

(b) The parish and town councils whose status is currently being assessed are:

Name of council	*County*
Stoke Gifford Parish Council	Avon
Newbury Town Council	Berkshire
Sedgefield Town Council	Durham
Peterlee Town Council	Durham
Hamble-le-Rice Parish Council	Hampshire
Petersfield Town Council	Hampshire
Stone Parish Council	Kent
Braunstone Parish Council	Leicestershire and Rutland
Lancing Parish Council	Sussex

Public Carriage Roads

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many roads used as public paths, as introduced under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, have been reclassified as byways open to all traffic in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 on the basis of *(a)* conclusive evidence of dedication as a public carriage road by the landowner and *(b)* circumstantial evidence of deemed dedication as a public carriage road by the landowner; and in each case, how many were inspected to ensure compliance with standards set out in Part 10 of the Highways Act 1980. [162357]

Alun Michael: Information relating to the basis on which roads used as public paths have been reclassified is not held by local highway authorities in a form in which it can be readily retrieved. The requirement is for highway authorities to maintain byways open to all traffic (BOATS) in a condition that is fit for purpose rather than to meet a fixed statutory standard.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are in place to ensure that the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management does not duplicate work already undertaken by other organisations. [159025]

Mr. Morley: CoRWM has clearly stated terms of reference that require it to provide recommendations to UK Government and devolved Administrations on how best to manage the UK's higher activity radioactive waste in the long-term under the "Managing Radioactive Waste Safely" programme. These terms of reference may be viewed on the Committee's website, http://www.open.gov.uk/rwmac.

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact on long-term radioactive waste management of *(a)* the continued ownership of Nirex by the nuclear industry, *(b)* the ownership of Nirex by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and *(c)* making Nirex independent of the nuclear industry. [160008]

Mr. Morley: We have asked the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) to provide the Government with recommendations on the best form of long-term management for the UK's higher activity radioactive waste. Government have stated their intent to make Nirex independent of industry and under greater Government control to allow an effective contribution to CoRWM's work. We are continuing to give consideration to the possibilities for this; when we are ready, an announcement will be made. In the meantime we are working to ensure Nirex continues to discharge its functions for the benefit of the public as well as its shareholders.

Recycling

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which 10 local authorities in England achieved the *(a)* highest and *(b)* lowest rates for household recycling in 2002–03. [162049]

Mr. Morley: The percentage of household waste recycled and composted by the 10 highest and lowest performing local authorities in England, for which the most recent data available are 2002–03, is presented in the following table:

Local authority	*Percentage of household waste recycled and composted in 2002–03*[1]
Daventry district council	44
Lichfield district council	43
Wyre district council	33
Melton district council	31
Isle of Wight district council	31
St. Edmundsbury district council	30
Windsor and Maidenhead borough council	29
Forest Heath district council	28
Eastleigh	28
Chiltern district council[2]	27
Dorset county council[2]	27
Kettering district council	4
North Tyneside council	4
Rochdale metropolitan borough council	4
Corby district council	4
Tower Hamlets London borough	3
Bolsover district council	3
Hackney London borough	3
Sunderland city council	2
Barking and Dagenham London borough	2
Liverpool Metropolitan borough council	2

[1] These data are published by ODPM and are available at www.bvpi.gov.uk. The level of household waste recycling in local authorities is the sum of Best Value Performance Indicator 82a and 82b (percentage of household waste sent for recycling and composting respectively).

[2] Joint tenth place.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what level of household recycling was achieved in each London borough in the latest year for which figures are available. [162050]

Mr. Morley: The percentage of household waste recycled and composted by each London borough, for which the most recent data available are 2002–03, is presented in the table.

Local authority	*Percentage of household waste recycled and composted in 2002–03*[1]
City of London	14.5
Camden	16.1
Greenwich	9.4
Hackney	2.6
Hammersmith and Fulham	8.5
Islington	5.8
Kensington and Chelsea	7.9
Lambeth	11.0
Lewisham	7.3
Southwark	4.6
Tower Hamlets	3.4
Wandsworth	10.5
Westminster	11.5
Barking and Dagenham	2.2
Barnet	12.1
Bexley	22.0
Brent	6.6

Local authority	Percentage of household waste recycled and composted in 2002–03[1]
Bromley	15.4
Croydon	13.1
Baling	10.7
Enfield	11.7
Haringey	4.4
Harrow	9.4
Havering	6.7
Hillingdon	19.5
Hounslow	15.1
Kingston-upon-Thames	19.0
Merton	15.0
Newham	4.2
Redbridge	10.0
Richmond-upon-Thames	20.5
Sutton	19.3
Waltham Forest	10.2

[1] These data are published by ODPM and are available at www.bvpi.gov.uk. The level of household waste recycling in local authorities equates to the addition of BV82a (sent for recycling) and BV82b (sent for composting).

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what penalties are imposed on local authorities who fail to meet recycling targets. [162051]

Mr. Morley: The Secretary of State has powers under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 to act where authorities are failing to deliver best value. She may consider using these powers to require an authority to make the necessary arrangements to ensure that Statutory Performance Standards for recycling and composting are met.

The starting point would be to invite the authority to submit an action plan setting out how it proposed to meet the standard by a given deadline. If the plan were considered unsatisfactory, follow-up action could range from inviting consultants to provide advice to the authority, to the Secretary of State taking over the waste management duties of the authority until such time as sufficient improvement is secured and can be sustainably maintained by the authority. Any of these steps is likely to have financial consequences for the authority.

We have, however, made clear that we will only use intervention powers as a last resort, and have established a Local Authority Support Unit in Defra's Waste Implementation Programme to assist local authorities in meeting their targets.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action her Department is taking to ensure that local authorities have sufficient funds to promote home-based waste separation for recycling. [163153]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 23 March 2004]:* Local authority waste management services are funded through the Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services (EPCS) block. Spending Review 2002 increased provision by £671 million over the three years to 2005–06 and we will again be considering the quantum of funding as part of Spending Review 2004. In addition, on 6 January I announced that Defra will be distributing a share of a £20 million grant to all local authorities in England to address the pressure each faces to invest in waste management services in 2004–05.

Within Defra we have also established the Waste Implementation Programme (WIP), investing in strategic measures to help authorities to divert waste from landfill. Through the Waste Minimisation and Recycling ('Challenge') Fund, WIP provides funds for local authorities to implement projects that improve recycling infrastructure in their area. Many of these projects improve the design and coverage of kerbside recycling schemes, including household separation. In 2003–04 the Challenge Fund has distributed £62.5 million to 14 big-ticket 'partnership' projects, and £43.3 million to 51 smaller projects.

WIP has made £30 million available to the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) for communications and awareness work directly focused on increasing participation in recycling and waste minimisation initiatives. A significant proportion has been allocated to a new fund, targeted at communications projects delivered at local level, primarily by local authorities, including:

£1.7 million recently allocated to support the continuation or expansion of existing local communications schemes;

£8.5 million to communications programmes directly supporting new recycling infrastructure funded by WIP under the Challenge fund;

£8.5 million to fund other communications activity delivered at local or regional level through WRAP'S Performance Improvement Through Communications Initiative.

WRAP also operate a free advisory service available to local authorities that need to implement and improve kerbside collection systems.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action her Department is taking to ensure that local authorities meet their objectives for home based waste separation for recycling within the EU timeframe. [163154]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 23 March 2004]:* There are no obligations for local authorities to implement home based waste separation under EU law.

In England, the Household Waste Recycling Act requires that waste collection authorities, except in certain circumstances, collect at least two types of recyclable material separate from the residual waste by December 2010.

In addition, local authorities in England have statutory targets in place to ensure that the national targets for increasing the recycling or composting rate to 25 per cent. by 2005, 30 per cent. by 2010 and 33 per cent. by 2015, are met. The Government-funded Waste Resources Action Programme is establishing a programme of advice and training for local authorities to improve collection systems for recyclable materials and organic wastes.

Science Strategy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she

has taken to enhance science in her Department since the publication of the Government's science strategy, Investing in Innovation. [162251]

Alun Michael: Science plays an essential, and increasingly important role in underpinning and informing Defra's policies across the three areas of environment, food and rural affairs. Defra is therefore strongly committed to maintaining and enhancing its science capabilities, in line with our Science and Innovation Strategy (Delivering the Evidence) published in May 2003. Our R&D budget is ring fenced at over £150 million per annum, and are aiming to protect this in real terms across the SR2002 period and beyond. We also spend in excess of £170 million per annum on a wide range of other types of science, including scientific advice, field trials, knowledge transfer, surveillance and monitoring.

Defra is committed to developing its scientific capabilities and performance, building on the recommendations of the SR2002 Cross Cutting Review of Science and Research and the Government's Investing in Innovation strategy. Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser is the corporate sponsor for a number of on-going science initiatives designed to ensure that:

- we are carrying out the right scientific activities to underpin current and future policy needs and to anticipate emerging risks and opportunities;
- the scientific advice we obtain, and the science activities supporting it, is of a high quality;
- we have access to the right expertise and skills to procure and interpret scientific information, and that scientific advice is used appropriately in the policy making process; and
- Defra science is open and transparent, and its aims and results are effectively communicated.

Our rural affairs approach in both policy and delivery is informed by high quality research and analysis. The publication ("Social and economic change and diversity in rural England") in January was the first of a series from the Rural Research Centre led by Birkbeck College but including academics from other institutions.

Defra's next Science and Innovation Strategy (due to be published spring 2005) will, among other things, address innovation in support of policy priorities and sustainable wealth creation, including technology foresight and horizon scanning, and support for technology transfer and innovation.

Sugar Regime

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she intends to announce the outcome of the consultation on reform of the sugar regime; and if she will make a statement. [160490]

Alun Michael: We are considering the wide range of views received and hope to produce a summary soon. In the meantime the responses themselves are available for public inspection in the Defra library.

Trophy Hunting

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to regulate specialist travel consultants who offer trophy-hunting packages to their clients. [158724]

Mr. Morley: The Government have no plans to take steps to control the activities of those who offer legal trophy hunting packages. Powers are available to refuse the import of hunting trophies and we shall not hesitate to use them where there is evidence that hunting trophies have been taken illegally, or that such hunting is itself unsustainable.

Warm Front (Cleethorpes)

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many successful applications have been made for Warm Front grants in Cleethorpes constituency. [162581]

Mr. Morley: Between the launch of Warm Front in June 2000 and the end of December 2003, approximately 2,100 households in the Cleethorpes constituency received assistance from the scheme.

Waste Management

Mr. Peter Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what funds are available to businesses wishing to explore new methods of *(a)* recycling and *(b)* disposing of waste plastics. [162228]

Mr. Morley: In addition to the general support that is available to businesses funded by the Department of Trade and Industry, the Waste and Resources Action Programme may fund research and development, capital investment or business advice and support for projects concerned with the recycling of plastics.

Further support may be available through Defra's Waste Implementation Programme which has a research budget for funding work on recycling and sustainable disposal methods across all waste streams. Defra is developing a waste research strategy which will identify key areas where research activity will need to be focused.

Mr. Peter Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the uses to which recycled waste farm plastics may be put. [162257]

Mr. Morley: We understand that recycled farm plastics can be used to make a range of products including damp proof membrane and damp proof courses, refuse sacks and bin liners, clinical waste sacks and aprons, plastic pallets and street and garden furniture.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will issue guidance to businesses to focus waste collection efforts where this delivers maximum economic and environmental benefit. [163096]

Mr. Morley: There are no plans to issue guidance to businesses to focus collection efforts. However, the Government does fund Envirowise, an organisation that offers free, independent advice to business on practical ways to minimise waste and increase profit.

In addition, Budget 2003 announced that increases in the standard rate of landfill tax would be revenue neutral to business as a whole. To achieve this Government are proposing a package of measures

including grants, other financial support measures and extending promotional and capacity building services to support a broader range of commercial and industrial sectors. These measures, which are undergoing detailed development, with consultation, should help businesses improve their waste performance.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what budget will be available in 2004–05 to the Waste and Resources Research Advisory Group. [162443]

Mr. Morley: No budget is allocated to the Waste and Resources Research Advisory Group (WRRAG), beyond minor costs incurred in the running of the group. WRRAG's role is to make recommendations to Defra on key research priorities to be addressed in a three-year waste research strategy currently being drawn up. The strategy will be subject to consultation later in the year and will be put out to wider consultation.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether appointments to the Waste and Resources Research Advisory Group have been made in accordance with the Nolan principles. [162444]

Mr. Morley: The Waste and Resources Research Advisory Group is classified as an ad hoc advisory group and is not constituted formally as a non-departmental public body. However, appointments have been fully consistent with the ethical parameters set out by the seven Nolan principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. The group is providing Defra with expert input into the development of a three-year waste research strategy, which will be subject to consultation later in this year.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the *(a)* title and *(b)* subject matter of the waste management research projects that have been commissioned by (i) her Department and (ii) bodies sponsored by her Department since 1 April 2003. [162445]

Mr. Morley: Research projects commissioned by Defra and bodies sponsored by it since 1 April 2003 are set out in the following list. The titles indicate the subject matter.

Defra

Hazardous Waste and WEEE: identifying products and components of present and historic WEEE that are hazardous

A review of exemptions from the waste management licensing regulations for hazardous waste

An action plan for the reduction and environmentally sound management of hazardous waste

Review of Environmental and Health Effects of Waste Management: Municipal Solid Waste and Similar Wastes

Environment Agency

Waste management life cycle assessment tool—model development

List I organic biodegradation/sorption within landfill liners

Establishing equilibrium and pollutant removal requirements for UK landfill

The management of hazardous wastes under new EU legislation

Factors affecting the generation of chloroethene and associated trace gases in landfill

Waste and Resources Action Programme

To increase timber waster recycling through determining and promoting best practice in the furniture industry

Develop methods and sampling protocols for measuring contaminants in recycled wood panelboard sector

Wood residues footprint for the M62 west corridor

Rapid identification and sorting of preservative treated timber

NIRA as a tool for assessing recycled wood

Development of waste sawdust as a plant protection material for horticulture and agriculture

To further develop plastic media for water filtration units with a known service life in larger filtration units

Develop process for recycling carpet waste

Development of mass produced thermoplastic panels

Achieve certification of products containing recycled plastics

Tonnages and collection of construction site packaging

REWARD and Photochem: an assessment of the weathering of recycled plastics

Identifying and maximising affordable plastic bottle collection systems from household kerbside collections

Materials and products from UK-sourced PVC-rich waste for new and existing markets

New applications for Jazz PET

Development of Food Grade HDPE Recycling Process

Develop Options for enhancing Commercial and Industrial Film Collection

Study to Identify Methods of Enhancing Local Authority Collection of Plastics

Use of Post-Consumer Recyclate in Retail Packaging

Research to determine performance of recycled glass sand compared to sand in the sports turf industry

Determine Vortex grinder construction materials for cullet grinding

Identifying legal and commercial barriers to glass recycling in West Oxfordshire—Oxford Brookes University

Increase use of mixed colour cullet reprocessing

To identify BPEO's for use of glass cullet in construction and promote technical confidence in it's use in the construction industry

Research to replace current "fluxing" agent in sanitary ware with waste bottle glass

Improve site practices for collection and clean separation of composite materials

To develop methodology for recycling lamp glass, overcoming technical and practical barriers to recycling

Researching the use of ground glass in brick manufacture

Produce advanced filtration medium using processed glass material

Closing the fibre waste recycling loop

Materials recovery from waste cathode ray tubes

ConGlassCrete II

Increasing collection and recycling of post consumer domestic window waste Feasibility study for the removal of colour from the glass furnace

Pilot Studies for glass collection from urban licensed premises

Pilot Studies for Glass Collection from Urban Licensed Premises

To develop test methods and inorganic contamination limits for recovered container glass

R and D Promoting Recycled Paper (Cellulose) Insulants in Metallic Modular Construction

Toolbox approach to improved recycled fibre use in the UK corrugated case industry

Research into using recycled waste paper residues in construction products

Support development of standards for compost by investigating pathogens of concern for high-quality end-uses (follows Compost standards open R and D competition)

Market development—peat substitution

Determining the market share of recycled materials in the UK economy: development of methodology

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what funding *(a)* her Department and *(b)* bodies sponsored by it have made available since March 2003 for research projects relating to waste management. [162446]

Mr. Morley: The following funding has been made available for research projects relating to waste management by Defra and bodies sponsored by Defra, since March 2003:

Organisation	*£000*
Defra	661
Environment Agency	1,220
Waste and Resource Action Programme	2,695

No funds have yet been assigned to research from Defra's Waste Implementation Programme research budget.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the additional resources that will be made available to *(a)* the Environment Agency and *(b)* local authorities to detect the unlicensed management of waste. [162465]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is funded through GIA for its enforcement work. This year, about £12 million was spent on waste-related enforcement activity. Local authorities receive funding through the EPCS element of their block grant and will decide resource allocations according to local priorities.

Defra is currently consulting on a fly-tipping strategy which is designed to ensure greater effectiveness, achieved within existing resources.

However, Defra has given the Environment Agency additional funding this year to set up and maintain "Flycapture", a web based database that will enable local authorities and the Agency to fulfil the data requirements of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what modelling her Department has *(a)* undertaken and *(b)* commissioned into the possible impact of the implementation of higher environmental standards on illegal waste (i) management and (ii) disposal activity. [161800]

Mr. Morley: Defra launched a consultation on its proposed Fly-Tipping Strategy on 23 February 2004. This strategy proposes several changes to help deal with illegally disposed waste and contains a partial regulatory impact assessment (RIA).

Defra is also commissioning a comprehensive research project looking at the causes and incentives of illegal waste disposal that will result in a good practice guide for practitioners focusing on pro-active, preventative policies.

HEALTH

"Delivering Race Equality"

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish the responses received to "Delivering Race Equality"; and when he will publish the Government's proposals. [163562]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We plan to issue two documents, the final version of Delivering Race Equality and a summary of the consultation responses in early summer.

Biomedicine

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons the Government have not signed the Council of Europe Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine. [162705]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* The convention covers a wide range of complex ethical and legal issues where United Kingdom domestic policy is still to be resolved following consultations. These matters will need to be concluded before the Government are in a position to consider signing and ratifying the convention.

Breast Screening

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made on extending breast screening to younger women; and if he will make a statement. [163688]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Forrest report, on which the breast screening programme is based, recommended further research to assess the clinical and cost-effectiveness of offering routine screening to women under 50. This is under way, entitled, "Randomised controlled trial of the effect of breast cancer mortality of annual mammographic screening of women starting at age 40" (the 'Age' Trial).

The main aim of the study is to evaluate the effect of annual mammographic screening of women starting at ages 40 to 41 on mortality from breast cancer, thus giving a definitive answer to the outstanding question of whether population screening below 50 is beneficial or not. The study began in February 1991, and recruitment to the trial has now stopped at 160,000 women. The study costs over £1 million a year to run. As the trial is primarily looking at mortality benefits, full results are not expected before 2005.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what resources he will be making available to implement the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines on the management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. [163799]

Dr. Ladyman: Primary care trusts (PCTs), in partnership with local stakeholders, are responsible for deciding what local service improvements need to be made.

The national health service is currently receiving the largest sustained increase in funding in its history. The total of PCT allocations is £45 billion for 2003–04, £49.3 billion for 2004–05 and £53.9 billion for 2005–06. This represents an increase of £12.7 billion, or an average of 30.8 per cent. over the three years 2003–06.

Cluster Headaches

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that the needs of those who suffer from cluster headaches are taken into account in the tender for the supply of domiciliary oxygen. [163909]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Healthcare professionals are responsible for assessing and prescribing oxygen therapy for patients, including those suffering from cluster headaches. The new contract, being developed to support introduction of a modernised, integrated, oxygen service from 2005, will require service contractors to supply oxygen in a way that best meets the needs of the patient, as set out in the patient's prescription.

Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of computer misuse there were in his Department in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003, broken down by category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [163250]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department takes very seriously any misuse of its information technology systems. All computer users are made aware of the Department's acceptable use policy, which is brought to the attention of new users and is available on the Department of Health Intranet.

Figures for the year 1997 are not available. The table shows the total recorded cases of significant breaches of the Department's acceptable use policy. Figures cover downloading of inappropriate material, loading of unauthorised software and the storage and circulation of inappropriate emails. A more detailed breakdown of these figures is not available. Management checks indicate only a small number of the breaches involve inappropriate content.

2003

Type of misuse	*Total cases*
Internet	2
Email	5
Internet and e-mail	0
Total no of cases	7
Police conviction	1
Action outstanding	2
Disciplinary action taken	4

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when he will reply to the letter to him from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, dated 17 February with regard to Dr. P. W. Bishop. [161801]

(2) when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 12 February 2004, with regard to Dr. D. W. Bishop. [163301]

Dr. John Reid: A reply was sent to my right hon. Friend on 26 March 2004.

Dentistry

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the population had access to an NHS dentist in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2000 and *(c)* 2003. [155543]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The Adult Dental Health Survey in 1998 showed that 71 per cent. of the population had seen a dentist in the previous year. Table 1 shows the percentage of dentate adults surveyed that last visited the dentist in given periods.

Table 1

Time since last visit to the dentist[1]	*Percentage of dentate adults*
Up to 1 year	71
Over 1 year, up to 2 years	7
Over 2 years, up to 5 years	12
Over 5 years, up to 10 years	6

[1] Excludes those who have never been to the dentist.

There is no straightforward measure of national health service dental access. However, adult courses of NHS dental treatment have continued to increase; from 24.6 million in 1997, to 25.9 million in 2000, to 26.3 million in 2003.

Adult registrations with a General Dental Service (CDS) dentist fell in September 1997, because of a reduction in the registration period from 24 to 15 months in September 1996, and have been relatively stable since then. Table 2 shows the numbers of registrations and registration rates as a percentage of the population for adults and children at September in the years 1997, 2000 and 2003 for England.

Table 2

	Number (million)	*Rates (percentage)*
1997[1]		
Adults	19.38	51.0
Children	7.37	65.2
Total	26.75	54.3
2000		
Adults	16.81	43.4
Children	6.85	60.7
Total	23.66	47.3
2003		
Adults	16.65	44.0
Children	6.67	60.0
Total	23.32	47.6

[1] The registration periods were changed in September 1996, which affected registration numbers from December 1997.

The registration period is currently 15 months, so patients who have not attended a dentist within that period will not be included in the registration figures.

Anyone wishing to find a dentist with whom to register for NHS dental care, or obtain emergency or occasional treatment, should normally be able to do so by calling NHS Direct. In first 10 months of 2003, NHS Direct was able to give 93 per cent. of callers details of a dentist taking new NHS patients in their area and within local distance standards. Corresponding information is not available for the years 1997 and 2000.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the NHS budget has been spent on providing dental care in each of the last five years. [155544]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The gross national health service spend on the general dental service (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS) and the percentage this represents of total NHS expenditure for 1997–98 to 2002–03 is shown in the table. During this period, gross spend on the GDS and PDS has increased by 15 per cent. in real terms.

Gross NHS general dental expenditure and percentage of NHS gross expenditure

	Gross expenditure on general dental service and personal dental service[1] (£ million)	*Gross expenditure on general dental service and personal dental services[1, 2] as a percentage of total gross NHS expenditure[3]*
1997–98	1,349	3.57
1998–99	1,443	3.61
1999–2000	1,491	3.43
2000–01	1,582	3.31
2001–02	1,674	3.17
2002–03	1,750	3.01

[1] Gross expenditure includes income raised through dental charges paid by patients.
[2] Expenditure on the community and hospital dental services has not been included as the information is not collected centrally.
[3] The expenditure figures used for the comparison are on a cash basis up to and including 1999–2000 and on a resource basis thereafter.

Under proposals set out in the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003, primary care trusts (PCTs) will assume responsibility for commissioning primary dental care services. With these responsibilities will go the financial resources amounting to some £1.3 billion, which are currently held centrally.

We have guaranteed that dentists working in the GDS will have an automatic right to a contract under the new arrangements and that their gross earnings will be protected over the transition period of three years. During this period, PCTs' newly devolved dentistry allocations will represent a minimum level of spend on NHS which PCTs must maintain.

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many training places for dentists have been available in each of the last 10 years; [162032]

(2) how many places were available in each of the dental schools in each of the last 10 years; [162033]

(3) how many dentists qualified in each of the last 10 years. [162034]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The quota of training places available for dentists in dental schools in England, as shown in table 1, was set after the Dental Workforce Review conducted in 1987. It has not changed since then but, as the information on graduates in table 2 indicates, the number of students accepted fluctuates because dental schools are required to admit all applicants who achieve the 'A' level scores in the offer of admission the school makes.

Table 1: Number of training places available in England

Dental school	*Number of training places*
Birmingham	65
Bristol	50
King's College, London	145
Leeds	55
Liverpool	55
Manchester	60
Newcastle	68
QMW (Barts and The London)	55
Sheffield	47
Total	600

The numbers of dental students who have graduated from these courses over the last 10 years are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Number of graduates 1993–2003

	Number
1993–94	541
1994–95	492
1995–96	526
1996–97	535
1997–98	576
1998–99	581
1999–2000	585
2000–01	618
2001–02	591
2002–03	549

Diabetes

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what provisions are in place to increase the capacity of trained multidisciplinary teams to fulfil the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines on patient education for people with diabetes; [R] [163667]

(2) how many primary care trusts provide structured diabetes education in line with the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines published in May 2003; [R] [163669]

(3) when he expects the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance on patient education for people with diabetes to be implemented in full; [R] [163671]

(4) what percentage of people with diabetes were invited to structured diabetes education sessions with a trained multidisciplinary team in the last 12 months; and what the average frequency was of the follow-up sessions. [R] [163672]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In publishing its guidance on patient education in diabetes, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence acknowledged that successful implementation of structured educational programmes would depend on the availability of an appropriately

trained workforce. Patient education models are currently being made available locally for use by the national health service. This should help primary care trusts to meet the planning and priorities framework target of having practice based registers and systematic treatment, including structured education, in place for people with diabetes by 2006.

The development of the diabetes workforce capacity is the responsibility of the long-term conditions care group workforce team. "Skills for Health" has been commissioned by the care group workforce team to develop competence frameworks for the diabetes workforce. This work includes identifying the competences needed to undertake structured education programmes for people with diabetes. Once complete, this work will be used in many different ways, for example, education commissioning, skills analysis and training needs analysis.

Information is not collected centrally on the local operation of patient education programmes.

Health Spending (West Derbyshire)

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much public money was spent on health in the constituency of West Derbyshire between *(a)* 1992 and 1997, *(b)* 1997 and 2001 and *(c)* 2001 and 2004. [163737]

Dr. Ladyman: The information is not available in the format requested. Expenditure per weighted head in the Trent Strategic Health Authority (SHA) area, which includes the constituency of West Derbyshire, has increased from £610.10 in 1997–98 to £862.03 in 2002–03—the latest year available. This does not represent the total expenditure per head as an element of health expenditure cannot be identified by SHA area.

Integrated Community Equipment Service Team

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what period he will support the Integrated Community Equipment Service Team; and what budget has been allocated for 2004–05. [164344]

Dr. Ladyman: It is intended to continue the integrating community equipment services team until March 2005. The budget for 2004–05 has not yet been finalised.

Maternity Services (Asylum Seekers)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* maternity and *(b)* antenatal services asylum-seeking women will have access to after 1 April 2004. [163635]

Dr. Ladyman: Women whose application for asylum is under consideration are able to access the same maternity and antenatal services as the resident population. There will be no change to these arrangements on 1 April 2004.

Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how he plans to ensure consumer representation on the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency's expert working group on selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors. [162492]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Committee on the Safety of Medicine's expert working group on the safety of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors included lay membership from its inception—uniquely for an expert group. Following the resignation of one of the lay members, we intend to appoint another lay member to the group as soon as possible.

Mental Health Services

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what guidance has been given to NHS trusts on the provision of *(a)* appropriate clothing and *(b)* other personal items to patients with mental health problems on their return to the community; [163261]

(2) what guidance has been issued to NHS trusts on their responsibility for the provision of clothing to long-stay patients. [163262]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 March 2004]:* As outlined in the National Service Framework for Mental Health (1999), trusts should ensure that appropriate organisational arrangements are in place to secure good standards of privacy and dignity for hospital patients.

The care programme approach requires patients' health and social care needs to be fully assessed and addressed in their care plans. Care plans should be reviewed regularly, particularly upon discharge from hospital. This principle is embodied in "Effective Care Co-ordination in Mental Health Services (1999)".

We would expect the trust to take account of the basic needs of the patient and asses these in the context of his or her wishes, the length of the hospital stay, and any other available resources.

Nappies

Phil Sawford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS hospitals have *(a)* formal and *(b)* exclusive agreements with (i) manufacturers and (ii) suppliers of disposable nappies. [164112]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not held centrally.

NHS (South Tyneside)

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent per capita by the NHS in South Tyneside in each year since 1997; and what spending is projected for 2004. [162864]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Available information on the average amount of national health service spending per weighted head for the former Gateshead and South Tyneside Health Authority for 1996–97 to 2001–02 is shown in table 1. The information for 2002–03 is not available in the same format and is shown as the average spending per weighted head for the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority. Revenue allocations per weighted head for 2003–04 to 2004–05 are shown in table 2.

Table 1: Expenditure per head by health authority area

	Expenditure per head (£)
Gateshead and South Tyneside Health Authority area	
1996–97	645.55
1997–98	614.40
1998–99	631.75
1999–2000	727.51
2000–01	784.29
2001–02	886.71
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority area	
2002–03	997.49

Table 2: Primary care trust revenue allocations by strategic health authority area

Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority area	*Revenue allocations per head (£)*
2003–04	915
2004–05	1,001

Notes:
1. 2002–03 data remains provisional.
2. Revenue allocations to primary care trusts 2003–04 to 2004–05.
3. Weighted population figures 1996–97 to 2004–05.

Sources:
Audited accounts of the Gateshead and South Tyneside Health Authority 1996–97 to 1998–99.
Audited summarisation forms of the Gateshead and South Tyneside Health Authority 1999–2000 to 2001–02.
Audited summarisation forms of the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority 2002–03.
Audited summarisation schedules of primary care trusts within the health authority areas.

NHS Beds (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the number of NHS beds available in Crosby in each year since 1997. [160436]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on the average daily number of beds in acute wards in each national health service trust and England from 1996–97 to 2002–03 is available from the Department's website at www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/index.htm.

Information on beds is collected on a provider basis from NHS organisations. Relevant available information on beds for two trusts in the area is shown in the tables.

Average daily number of available beds by sector—Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust 1996–97 to 2002–03

	All specialties[1]	*General and acute*	*Acute*	*Geriatric*	*Mental illness*	*Learning disability*	*Maternity*	*Day only*
1996–97	1,194	928	772	155	195	0	71	47
1997–98	1,190	934	779	156	193	0	62	38
1998–99	1,152	911	751	161	179	0	61	47
1999–2000	1,110	894	741	153	168	0	47	73
2000–01	1,163	968	812	156	156	0	39	63
2001–02	949	949	789	161	0	0	0	75
2002–03	905	905	743	162	0	0	0	71

[1] Excluding day only.
Source:
Department of Health form KH03

Average daily number of available beds by sector—Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust, 1996–97 to 2002–03

	All specialties[1]	*General and acute*	*Acute*	*Geriatric*	*Mental illness*	*Learning disability*	*Maternity*	*Day only*
1996–97	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1997–98	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1998–99	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1999–2000	627	590	456	134	0	0	37	41
2000–01	653	616	481	135	0	0	37	52
2001–02	605	569	456	112	0	0	36	58
2002–03	604	568	487	80	0	0	36	7

[1] Excluding day only.
Source:
Department of Health form KH03

NHS Staff

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS staff have been attacked in *(a)* Lancashire, *(b)* Preston and *(c)* Chorley Hospital in each of the last five years; and how many of the attackers have been prosecuted in each case. [151240]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* The Department does not collect this information in the form requested. The Department does, however, collect information on reported incidents of violence, which includes verbal abuse. The table shows the number of recorded incidents of violence in national health service organisations in Lancashire for which information is available.

Number of recorded incidents of violence in NHS organisations in Lancashire[1]

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Primary care trust			
Blackburn with Darwen PCT	[2]—	6	25
Blackpool PCT	[2]—	[2]—	59
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT	[2]—	[2]—	109
Chorley and South Ribble PCT	[2]—	0	4
Fylde PCT	[2]—	[2]—	28
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT	[2]—	[2]—	240
Preston PCT	[2]—	[2]—	135
West Lancashire PCT	[2]—	29	26
Wyre PCT	[2]—	[2]—	49
National health service trust			
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Health Care NHS Trust	459	496	78
Blackpool Victoria Hospital NHS Trust	377	[2]—	[2]—
Blackpool Wyre and Fylde Community Health Services NHS Trust	631	362	124
Burnley Healthcare NHS Trust	531	185	57
Calderstones NHS Trust	519	340	273
Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust	[3]78	422	[2]—
Communicare NHS Trust	373	132	[2]—
Guild Community Healthcare NHS Trust	370	408	[2]—
Lancashire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	112	161	104
Lancashire Care NHS Trust	[2]—	[2]—	1,353
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	[2]—	[2]—	399
North Sefton and West Lancashire Community NHS Trust	190	[2]—	[2]—

[1] Organisations in Lancashire for which information is available.
[2] Not applicable or not available.
[3] Includes Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.
Notes:
1. In April 2002, Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust was dissolved. Most of its staff were incorporated into Lancashire Care NHS Trust and Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. In April 2002, Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust was dissolved. Most of its staff were incorporated into Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. For 2000–01, a combined return was received from Preston Acute Hospitals and Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust.
2. Violence incidents are those reported that include verbal or physical abuse.
3. Figures for 2001–02 are from surveys by the Department of Health and the National Audit Office.
Sources:
Department of Health Surveys of Violence, Accidents and Harassment in the NHS National Audit Office.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what surveys he has conducted to determine morale of staff in NHS hospitals in the west Midlands; if he will publish the results; and if he will make a statement. [163824]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* The Department does not conduct surveys of local national health service staff. However, NHS employers have been required to conduct local staff opinion surveys since April 2000. The surveys were for local use only and the results were not collected nationally.

The Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) took on the responsibility for conducting and publishing the results of both national staff and patient surveys from April 2003.

Copies of the survey can be obtained from CHI's website at www.chi.nhs.uk. CHI will be publishing a more detailed breakdown of the survey results in its "State of the NHS" report, planned for June 2004.

Mr. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on the numbers of NHS *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses in Crosby in each of the last seven years; [160390]

(2) how many NHS *(a)* therapists and *(b)* scientists were located in Crosby in each of the last seven years. [160391]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not available on a constituency basis. Information is collected on a national health service trust basis and a primary care trust basis from 2001–02.

The information available has been placed in the Library.

North Bristol NHS Trust

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the role of *(a)* the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority and *(b)* his Department in determining the progress of the strategic outline case being prepared by North Bristol NHS Trust. [164383]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The process for the next prioritisation round is detailed as follows:

Health communities will describe their proposals for major capital investments in strategic outline cases (SOCs) and these will form the basis of the scheme's assessment. SOCs must demonstrate both health service need and deliverability. Both the trust and the main commissioners must be in agreement that the investment is likely to be affordable and deliverable. In addition the "host" strategic health authority (SHA), the SHA within which the proposed investment will fall, must agree that these assessments are realistic before submitting the SOC to the Department.

Central assessment will not second guess the SHA's view on health service need; instead, it will concentrate on factors that influence the deliverability of the scheme, including the quality of stakeholder support, project management arrangements and technical considerations.

SOCs will be peer-reviewed by other SHAs operating as part of a technical group, coordinated and guided by the Department. The technical group will report to the Department of Health which will make a recommendation to Ministers. We expect decisions to be announced in the summer.

Ophthalmology

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the performance of the Levent ophthalmology teams contracted by Trent Strategic Health Authority; and what plans he has to extend their contracts in the Trent region. [163341]

Dr. Ladyman: The Levent ophthalmology team contracted by Trent Strategic Health Authority (SHA) has operated on a total of 2,307 patients between September 2003 and March 2004. This exceeded the original contract volume by 859 patients.

Trent SHA report that it was very impressed by the working styles of the Levent clinics and their kind approach to patients.

The SHA is currently auditing clinical outcomes for the Levent project; which it anticipates will be completed within the next few months, when the final outcomes will be available. While the SHA has no plans to issue further contracts to Levent at this time, it has confirmed that Erewash Primary Care Trust is considering contracting further cataract surgery in 2004–05.

PET Scanners

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to publish the framework document for PET scanners. [163056]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department will publish a framework for Positron Emission Tomography scanning for consultation by early summer. Copies will be placed in the Library.

Prescription Drugs

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will require pharmaceutical companies to publish the results of experiments involving prescription drugs. [163902]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are no plans currently in place to require disclosure of the results of company research on prescription drugs. The Government welcome the pharmaceutical industry's support for the Department of Health's research governance framework for health and social care, which recognises that it is researchers' responsibility to ensure that research findings are opened to critical review through the accepted scientific and professional channels and disseminated promptly once established. The Government encourage the pharmaceutical industry to disclose research results to the maximum extent consistent with regulatory process and intellectual property rights.

Respiratory Conditions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has for a national service framework for respiratory conditions. [163801]

Dr. Ladyman: There are no plans for a national service framework (NSF) covering respiratory conditions.

The children's NSF will include childhood asthma as an exemplar condition.

The NSF for coronary heart disease already has a reduction in cigarette smoking as one of its major targets. We have also banned tobacco advertising and made smoking reduction aids available on national health service prescription.

Additionally the National Institute for Clinical Excellence issued clinical guidelines for the NHS on 27 February 2004 for the prevention, diagnosis, management and treatment of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Seroxat

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have been recorded as having suffered adverse side effects from the prescription of Seroxat. [163566]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) receive reports of suspected adverse drug reactions (ADRs) submitted by health professionals on a voluntary basis via the yellow card scheme and there is a legal requirement for companies to report suspected ADRs to their drugs.

A total of 8,960 reports of suspected ADRs have been received through the yellow card scheme in association with paroxetine (Seroxat) since 1990.

St. Jude Silzone Heart Valve

Mr Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will take measures to ensure that all surviving UK recipients of the St. Jude silzone heart valve are informed why these valves have been withdrawn from the market; and if he will make a statement; [163194]

(2) if he will take measures to ensure that all UK recipients of the St Jude silzone heart valve are encouraged to contact for advice the hospitals and surgeons where and by whom they were fitted with these valves; and if he will make a statement. [163195]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department issued advice to United Kingdom cardiothoracic surgeons and cardiologists on the problems associated with the St. Jude Silzone heart valve in November 1999 and January 2000. Specifically, the Department advised clinicians of the recall of Silzone heart valves of the increased risk of complications with the Silzone heart valves and of the consequent need to undertake early

review of all patients implanted with these valves. Clinicians are responsible for acting on this advice and for bringing relevant information to the attention of their patients.

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what communication his Department has had with relevant authorities in the Irish Republic regarding the implications for British and Irish citizens of the withdrawal from the market of the St Jude silzone heart valve; and if he will make a statement. [163196]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department notified other European competent authorities of the action taken in the United Kingdom, in relation to Silzone heart valves, via notifications through the Medical Devices Vigilance System on 19 November 1999 and 3 February 2000. These notifications informed other competent authorities of the UK's recommendation to undertake an early review of all patients implanted with the Silzone heart valve and gave background to this advice. Notifications of this type are the recognised method for exchanging information on the safety of medical devices between European Member States.

Substance Misuse

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many alcohol treatment centres there are *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* the north west; and what the budget is for each. [162616]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* There are 475 alcohol treatment centres in England. We estimate that around £95 million is spent each year on alcohol treatment services in England. Most of the funding for alcohol treatment services is drawn from the mainstream budgets of the national health service and local authorities. The method of funding these services means that it is not possible to give a breakdown at regional level of budgets and expenditure.

TREASURY

National Statistics

John McDonnell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* births and *(b)* birth defects there were in the London borough of Hillingdon in each year since 1994; and what the rate of birth defects per 10,000 births was in the borough in each of those years. [163589]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. John McDonnell, dated 29 March 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking for the number of *(a)* births and *(b)* birth defects and rates of birth defects per 10,000 births in Hillingdon since 1994. (163589)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for maintaining the National Congenital Anomaly System (NCAS) notifications in England and Wales. These notifications are collected only for live and stillbirths (i.e. terminations are excluded) and are provided by NHS Trusts on a voluntary basis either directly to ONS or via local congenital anomaly registers that exchange data with ONS. In 1994 there were no registers exchanging information with NCAS. In 2000, NCAS began exchanging data with the North Thames (West) Congenital Malformation Register, which receives more complete information through multi-source ascertainment. It is a hospital-based register and includes information supplied from the maternity unit in Hillingdon. Up to eight malformations can be recorded on NCAS for each baby.

The latest year for which figures are available is 2001. Estimates of the figures requested, covering the period 1994–2001 are shown in the attached table.

Estimated numbers and rates of malformations recorded in the National Congenital Anomaly System[1] Hillingdon health authority, 1994 to 2001[2]

	Total live and stillbirths	*Estimated number of malformations notified*	*Rates per 10,000 live and stillbirths*
1994	3,542	69	194.8
1995	3,421	48	140.3
1996	3,476	51	146.7
1997	3,487	62	177.8
1998	3,551	38	107.0
1999	3,351	49	146.2
2000[3]	3,328	116	348.6
2001	3,260	87	266.9

[1] Notification to this system is voluntary at all stages and therefore may be incomplete, particularly in areas that are not covered by a local registry.

[2] Figures provided are by year of birth.

[3] In 2000, NCAS began exchanging data with the North Thames (West) Congenital Malformation Register, which receives more complete information through multi-source ascertainment. It is a hospital-based register and includes information supplied from the maternity unit in Hillingdon. It is likely that the inclusion of data from this register contributed to the large increase in the estimated number of malformations in Hillingdon in 2000.

Source:

Estimates based on numbers of babies notified to National Congenital Anomaly System at 31 July 2002 (Health Statistics Quarterly no. 16 Annual update: Congenital anomaly statistics—notifications 2001) and the number of malformations recorded for each notified case.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many new cancer diagnoses were made for teenagers and young adults in the 13 to 24 years age range in each of the last five years. [163890]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Ian Gibson, dated 29 March 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning how many new cancer diagnoses were made for teenagers and young adults in the 13 to 24 years age range in each of the last five years. (163890)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2000. The number of newly diagnosed cases of cancers for teenagers and young adults aged 13 to 24 years for each of the five years 1996–2000 in England, are given in the table below:

Number of newly diagnosed cases of cancer[1] in England, patients aged 13 to 24 years—1996 to 2000

	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
Males	676	825	736	765	829
Females	595	618	619	642	712
Total	1,271	1,443	1,355	1,407	1,541

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code C00-C97 excluding non-melanoma skin cancer—ICD-10 code C44.

Source:

Office for National Statistics.

Bob Spink: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children were aged *(a)* one, *(b)* two and *(c)* three in each of the last three years. [163551]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Robert Spink, dated 29 March 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your question concerning the population for children aged 1, 2 and 3. (163551)

Below is a table showing the mid-2000, mid-2001 and mid-2002 population estimate for children aged 1, 2 and 3 years for England and Wales.

Population aged 1, 2 and 3 years—England and Wales 2000 to 2002[1]

Thousand

Age	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
1	623.2	603.5	588.0
2	631.8	619.1	602.6
3	648.3	630.0	618.7

[1] Mid-year estimates of population.

Source:

Office for National Statistics.

John McDonnell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the incidence of birth defects was in each year since 1996, broken down by region. [163606]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. John McDonnell, dated 29 March 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking for the number of birth defects in England and Wales by region since 1996. (163606)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for maintaining the National Congenital Anomaly System (NCAS) notifications in England and Wales. These notifications are collected only for live and stillbirths (i.e. terminations are excluded) and are provided by NHS Trusts on a voluntary basis either directly to ONS or via local congenital anomaly registers that exchange data with ONS. In 1996 there were no registers exchanging information with NCAS. By 2001, NCAS received more complete information from four local congenital anomaly registers through multi-source ascertainment.

As a result, numbers of notifications in England and Wales have increased since 1996. These registers cover all births in Wales and 24 per cent. of births in England. For the remaining areas NCAS relies solely on SD56 notification forms and is likely to be less complete. Up to eight malformations can be recorded on the system for each baby.

The latest year for which figures are available is 2001. Estimates of the figures requested, covering the period 1996–2001 are shown in the attached table.

Estimated numbers of malformations recorded in the National Congenital Anomaly System[1]—England, Wales and English Government Office Regions, 1996–2001[2]

	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*
England and Wales	7,440	7,504	8,220	10,168	10,874	9,423
England	6,577	6,753	6,516	8,575	9,273	8,027
Wales	863	751	1,704	1,593	1,601	1,396
Government Office Regions						
North East	331	277	276	289	215	145
North West	1,120	1,122	1,118	1,257	1,744	1,471
Yorkshire and the Humber	858	913	740	1,103	1,186	973
East Midlands	430	534	515	1,593	1,480	1,565
West Midlands	699	713	705	754	690	623
East	641	624	634	693	737	721
London	1,037	951	907	871	1,375	1,157
South East	842	985	980	968	991	762
South West	619	634	641	1,047	855	610

[1] Notification to this system is voluntary at all stages and therefore coverage may be incomplete, particularly in areas that are not covered by a local registry. From 1998, ONS began to exchange data with local registers and by 2001, four such registers were exchanging data with NCAS. As a result, the total coverage of NCAS has increased.
[2] Figures provided are by year of birth.
Source:
Estimates based on numbers of babies notified to National Congenital Anomaly System (NCAS) at 31 July 2002 (Health Statistics Quarterly no. 16 Annual update: Congenital anomaly statistics—notifications 2001) and the number of malformations recorded for each notified case.

United States Container Security Initiative

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost of implementing in the United Kingdom the United States Container Security Initiative. [163586]

John Healey: The United States Government have met all the costs of installing equipment and providing US resources to work with HM Customs and Excise at the ports included in the initiative. Customs' costs are minimal and have not been separately quantified.

Aggregates Tax

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue the Treasury has received from aggregate dredging in each of the last five years. [163574]

John Healey: This information is not available, as revenue from this source is not separately identified in either aggregates levy or VAT returns.

Bureaux de Change

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to receive Lord Butterfield's report into fraud in relation to bureaux de change. [158707]

The Solicitor-General: I have been asked to reply.

Mr. Justice Butterfield is expected to deliver an interim report to the Attorney-General and the Economic Secretary to the Treasury in the near future.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have died from carbon monoxide poisoning in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* Huddersfield in each year since 1997. [163387]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Sheerman dated 29 March 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many people have died from carbon monoxide poisoning in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* Huddersfield in each year since 1997. (163387)

The latest year for which figures are currently available is 2002. Figures for the United Kingdom and Kirklees metropolitan district, which includes Huddersfield parliamentary constituency, are shown in the attached table from 1997 to 2002.

The number of deaths in Huddersfield constituency was below five in all but one of these years. Where the numbers of deaths was less than five the exact number has been suppressed to reduce the risk of disclosure of individual cases.

Number of deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning[1] in Kirklees[2] and the United Kingdom, 1997 to 2002[3]

Calendar year	*Kirklees*	*United Kingdom*
1997	13	934
1998	[4]—	803
1999	6	747
2000	6	601
2001	[4]—	545
2002	[4]—	469
Total	35	4,099

[1] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes for the years 1997 to 1999 for Scotland, 1997 to 2000 for England and Wales, and Northern Ireland, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes for 2000 to 2002 for Scotland, and 2001 to 2002 for England and Wales, and Northern Ireland. The codes used were as follows:

Toxic effect of carbon monoxide—ICD-9 986; ICD-10 T58.

The majority of deaths with a nature of injury code of toxic effect of carbon monoxide poisoning are suicides, (75 per cent. of carbon monoxide poisoning deaths in England and Wales in 1997; 69 per cent. in 2002). Some deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning are also of undetermined intent, homicides or the result of fires. A small proportion are the result of accidental poisoning (7 per cent. in England and Wales in 1997 and in 2002).

[2] Usual residents of Kirklees metropolitan district.

[3] Figures are based on deaths occurring in each calendar year in England and Wales, and deaths registered in each calendar year in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

[4] Fewer than five deaths.

Sources:

Office for National Statistics.

General Register Office for Scotland.

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

Champagne Imports

Bob Spink: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many litres of champagne were imported in each year since 1999. [163590]

John Healey: The number of litres of champagne imported under Commodity Code 2204 10 11 from 1999 to 2003 is shown in the following table:

	Litres of champagne
1999	24,027,371
2000	14,836,442
2001	17,245,344
2002	24,398,314
2003	24,063,213
1999 to 2003	104,570,684

Source:

Overseas Trade Statistics, HMCE, with monthly allocation for Below Threshold Trade.

Child Tax Credits

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many awards of Child Tax Credit have been determined to have been wrongly calculated in *(a)* the East Midlands and *(b)* West Derbyshire; and of those how many were (i) too high and (ii) too low. [163745]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for North Norfolk (Norman Lamb) on 22 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 664W.

Customs and Excise

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the action being taken by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise to combat the illegal importation of bushmeat into the United Kingdom. [163511]

John Healey: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Amess) on 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 935W.

Action to combat illegal imports of bushmeat is part of the overall strategy to tackle illegal imports of products of animal origin.

Demographics

Mr. Lilley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of the population increase expected under the principal projection issued by the Office for National Statistics on 18 December 2003 is due to the assumed level of net inward migration and the descendants of migrants. [160514]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* A note considering the impact of assumed net migration on projected population growth is now available on the GAD website at http://www.gad.gov.uk/Population/2002/methodology/mignote.htm

Departmental Buildings/Officials

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* renovation and *(b)* maintenance projects on buildings (i) owned and (ii) rented by his Department were undertaken in each of the last five years; and what the associated costs were of each. [163956]

Ruth Kelly: The total costs of refurbishment of 1 Horse Guards Road, occupied by the Treasury under a PFI Agreement in July 2002, were given in answer to the hon. Member for South Norfolk (Mr. Bacon) on 5 February 2002, *Official Report*, column 841W. The costs of essential refurbishment and redecoration works in the two Treasury office buildings and in 11 Downing Street during the years 1997–98/2000–01 were given in answer to the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow) on 6 February 2002, *Official Report*, column 954W. Buildings occupied by Customs and Excise, Inland Revenue and the Valuation Office Agency were transferred to Mapeley Limited on 1 April 2001, under which fully serviced accommodation is provided. Information on any renovation and maintenance projects carried out prior to this date is not readily available and could be constructed only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which former officials of the Department have asked for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst and Young and *(d)* KPMG. [156903]

Ruth Kelly: Civil servants are subject to the Business Appointments Rules, which set out the circumstances in which they must seek permission to accept outside appointments within two years of leaving the service. A copy of the Rules is available in the Libraries of the House. Information about appointments taken up by the most senior staff are published in the annual reports of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments. The next annual report will be published shortly.

Since 2001 one former official from the Treasury has asked for permission to join one of these organisations. Sir Steve Robson applied for, and was given, permission to undertake an appointment with KPMG. He subsequently took up this appointment.

Economic Statistics (Burton)

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many jobs have been created in Burton constituency since 1997; and what the level of unemployment was in the Burton constituency in each year since 1997. [161837]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Janet Dean, dated 29 March, 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about jobs created, and unemployment levels in Burton. (161837)

While statistics of new jobs created are not available explicitly, statistics from surveys enable comparisons to be made of net changes, from year to year. Table A shows the number of jobs in Burton Constituency in each year from 1997 to 2002, the latest year for which information is available.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) following International Labour Organisation definitions. However, the LFS sample size is too small to give reliable estimates of unemployment in the Burton Parliamentary Constituency.

ONS also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas including parliamentary constituencies. Table B gives the annual average number of JSA claimants for the Burton Constituency for each year since 1997.

Table A: Number of jobs[1] in the Burton constituency 1997 to 2002

	Number of jobs
1997	43,000
1998	46,600
1999	46,000
2000	49,500
2001	50,400
2002	51,700
Net change	
1997 to 2002	8,700

[1] Employee jobs only, not self-employed jobs.

Source:

1997; Annual Employment Survey, 1998–2002; Annual Business Inquiry (ABI).

Table B: JSA Claimants in the Burton constituency: 1997 to 2003 annual average

	JSA claimants
1997	2,369
1998	1,944
1999	1,801
2000	1,681
2001	1,392
2002	1,154
2003	1,072

Source:

Jobcentre Plus administrative system.

Employment Agency Staff

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the employment agencies which his Department has used to supply temporary staff in each financial year since 1996–97 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [163812]

Ruth Kelly: The following agencies have supplied temporary staff to the Department. This list has been compiled from readily available records. Analysis of all records to compile a comprehensive list would entail disproportionate cost.

Badenoch & Clark
Brook Street (UK) Ltd.
Glen Recruitment
Goodman Masson Recruitment Services Ltd.
Hays Accountancy Personnel
Hays IT
Hudson Global Resources Ltd.
Huntress Search Ltd.
IPS Group Ltd.
Jonathan Wren & Co. Ltd.
Lawson Bishop Financial Ltd.
Michael Page International
Office Angels
Parker Bridge Recruitment Ltd.
St. James's Consultancy
Stop Gap Ltd.
Sue Hill Recruitment & Services Ltd.
Supplypeople
TFPL Ltd.
TRS Management Resources (Services) Ltd..

Focus Groups and Opinion Polls

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* focus groups and *(b)* opinion polls in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [162749]

Ruth Kelly: Detailed information in the form requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Individual Savings Accounts

Mr. Flight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his best estimate is of the cost to the Exchequer of

the 10 per cent. credit that individual savings accounts receive on dividend distributions that will be abolished from April in each year since its introduction. [163077]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 23 March 2004]*: Estimates of the cost of the 10 per cent, credit received by Individual Savings Accounts since their introduction is given in the following table:

	£ million
1999–2000	10
2000–01	30
2001–02	60
2002–03	60
2003–04	[1]70

[1] Provisional.

Insurance Premium Tax

Mr. Flight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been raised in Insurance Premium Tax in each financial year since 1997–98 from *(a)* mortgage indemnity guarantee policies, *(b)* buildings insurance policies, *(c)* contents insurance policies and *(d)* private health insurance policies. [163596]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested is not available. Insurance Premium Tax receipts do not separately identify the categories of insurance to which they relate.

National Trust

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has had from the National Trust on facilitating through financial incentives the rescue of chattels at risk in National Trust properties, where owners have retained chattels. [160516]

John Healey: Treasury Ministers have received representations from the National Trust relating to the recommendations in Sir Nicholas Goodison's report "Securing the Best for Our Museums: Private Giving and Government Support", a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

The Government are carefully considering Sir Nicholas' recommendations in the context of the 2004 Spending Review and alongside other ongoing work on taxes.

Pensions (Equitable Life)

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made, following the publication of the Penrose Report, of *(a)* the percentage change in the value of an Equitable Life pension and *(b)* the average percentage change in the value of a with profits policy across the industry taken out (i) 20 years ago, (ii) 10 years ago and (iii) five years ago, broken down by (A) guaranteed annual return and (B) non-guaranteed annual return products. [161470]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* The information is not available in the form requested.

Equitable Life, in common with most closed life insurance funds, does not publish comparative information of this sort.

Stamp Duty

Mr. Flight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what projections he has made for revenue from stamp duty on *(a)* property and *(b)* share transactions in each of the (i) last five and (ii) next three financial years. [163598]

Ruth Kelly: Estimates of the revenue from stamp duty on both property and share transactions in each of the last five financial years up to and including 2002–03 are given at http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/stamp_duty/03IR151.pdf.

Estimated and projected revenues for total stamp taxes in 2003–04 and 2004–05 are published in table C8 of the Budget 2004 report. The breakdown between duty on land and property and share transactions is as follows:

		£ billion
	2003–04	*2004–05*
Stamp taxes on:		
Land and property	4.9	6.2
Shares	2.6	3.2

Tax Collection

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the administration costs have been, in each of the last five years, of collecting unpaid taxes. [R] [149810]

Dawn Primarolo: For years up to and including 2001–02, details of the duties collected by the Department and the associated costs of administering those duties can be found in Table 1 at Appendix 1 of the Inland Revenue Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2002 (published in December 2002).

For 2002–03, comparative figures are:

	£ million
Net receipt of Inland Revenue duties	219,194.8
Total cost of administering Inland Revenue duties	2,431.9

Unclaimed Assets

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the sum of unclaimed assets in *(a)* national savings and *(b)* other Government securities was on the latest date for which figures are available. [164338]

Ruth Kelly: "Unclaimed monies" in the National Savings and Investments Product Accounts refer to monies where: the product has been redeemed by the Treasury; monthly interest or prizes are due; or to uncashed Savings Stamps; and where the sums are transferable to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt. Total unclaimed monies as at 31 March 2003 were £31.9 million.

The estimated total of unclaimed, including issued but unpresented, redemption monies and dividends on gilts on the latest date for which figures are available was around £45 million.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has held with the banks on the use of unclaimed bank accounts; and what discussions he has had with the life insurance and pensions industry on the use of unclaimed policies. [161822]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 16 March 2004]*: Ministers and officials regularly meet representatives from the financial services industry and discuss a range of issues, including the use of unclaimed assets.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the value of *(a)* unclaimed *(b)* premium bond winnings, (i) state pensions, (ii) national savings bonds and (iii) other unclaimed private savings which represents a public sector liability. [161823]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 16 March 2004]*: National Savings and Investments (including Premium Bond Prizes) "Unclaimed monies" in the National Savings and Investments Product Accounts refer to monies where: the product has been redeemed by the Treasury; monthly interest or prizes are due; or to un-cashed Savings Stamps; and where the sums are transferable to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt. Total unclaimed monies as at 31 March 2003 were £31.9 million made up of:

	£000
British Savings Bonds	2,685
Income Bonds	1,344
Pensioners Guaranteed Income Bonds	17
Premium Bonds	22,085
Savings Stamps	5,781
Total	31,912

Unclaimed State Pensions

Information regarding the value of unclaimed State Pensions is not available. This is because there is no entitlement to a State Pension until a claim is made. Anyone who claims after reaching State Pension age may be able to receive a higher amount of State Pension when they do claim.

Government Stocks (Gilts)

The estimated total of unclaimed redemption money and dividends on gilts is around £31 million.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Payments (Scotland)

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Scotland were in receipt of *(a)* the minimum income guarantee *(b)* council tax benefit and *(c)* jobseeker's allowance in (i) 2000–01 and (ii) 2001–02. [163127]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

Minimum Income Guarantee, Council Tax Benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance recipients in Scotland in 2001 and 2002

Thousand

	February 2001	*February 2002*
Minimum Income Guarantee	173.9	181
Council Tax benefit	537.4	530.3
Jobseeker's Allowance	109.3	102.7

Notes:

1. Minimum Income Guarantee data refers to benefit units where the claimant and/or their partner are aged 60 or over, and therefore will include some claimants aged under 60.
2. Council Tax Benefit data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
3. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred and quoted in thousands.
4. Minimum Income Guarantee figures and Jobseeker's Allowance are based on a 5 per cent. sample; therefore they are subject to sampling variation.
5. Jobseeker's Allowance figures exclude 'nil benefit' cases where claimant is in receipt of NI credits only.
6. Council Tax Benefit figures are based on 100 per cent. counts. Figures for non-responding authorities have been estimated.
7. Council Tax Benefit totals exclude any Second Adult Rebate cases.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many non-pensioners in Scotland were in receipt of income support in *(a)* 2000–01 and *(b)* 2001–02. [163128]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

Working age Income Support claimants in Scotland in 2001 and 2002

	Thousand
February 2001	238.5
February 2002	237.0

Note:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred and quoted in thousands.
2. Based on 5 per cent. sample, therefore subject to sampling variation.

Source:

DWP-IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample

Benefits

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list each benefit available in 2004–05 as of right to older people, giving *(a)* the qualifying age and *(b)* the total annual Exchequer costs, broken down by uplift according to advancing age. [164068]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is in the table.

Benefit/entitlement	*Payable from age*	*Qualification*	*2004–05 forecast expenditure (£ million)*
Winter Fuel Payments	60	Non-contributory; non-income-related.	1,740
Pension Credit -Guarantee Credit	60	Dependent on income and capital.	4;940
Pension Credit -Savings Credit	65	Dependent on income and capital.	1,030
Contributory basic State Pension (Category A and Category B)	60 to 65	Depends on National Insurance contributions; non-income-related.	41,190
Christmas Bonus	60 to 65	Non-contributory; depends on receipt of qualifying benefit.	110

Benefit/entitlement	*Payable from age*	*Qualification*	*2004-05 forecast expenditure (£ million)*
Additional £100 payment (one-off Budget 2004 measure)	70	Non-contributory; non-income-related.	430
Free TV licences	75	Non-contributory; non-income-related.	420
80+ Annual Payment (Winter Fuel Payment)	80	Non-contributory; non-income-related.	210
Non-contributory basic State Pension (Category D)	80	Non-contributory; non-income-related. Depends on person: not receiving a State Pension or receiving a contributory State Pension lower than Category D rate at age 80; being resident in GB at age 80; and having lived in GB for a total of 10 years or more in any continuous period of 20 years before or after they reach age 80.	30
Age Addition to basic State Pension	80	Non-contributory; non-income-related.	40

Notes:
1. Expenditure figures are consistent with Budget 2004 forecasts and are for GB benefit expenditure.
2. Expenditure figures are rounded to the nearest £10 million.
3. The breakdown of spending may not sum to published totals due to rounding.
4. The figures include Pension Credit (Savings Credit) payments made to someone under age 65 if their partner is age 65 or over.
5. The basic State Pension is paid to women from age 60 and men from age 65.
6. The Christmas Bonus figure is for amounts paid with State Pension and Pension Credit. The Christmas Bonus can also be paid with other qualifying benefits to younger people.

Benefits Reforms (Scotland)

Mr. Roy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to introduce in Scotland piloted reforms to *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* housing benefit. [160253]

Mr. Pond: We are piloting Pathways to Work across Great Britain, a groundbreaking scheme that gives people on Incapacity Benefit access to a comprehensive range of work focused support which is already generating encouraging feedback. This scheme is currently being piloted in three areas including Renfrewshire, and will be extended to a further four areas in April 2004.

The overall strategy for reforming Housing Benefit is to improve administration, promote choice and responsibility, enhance work incentives and reduce levels of fraud and error in the system. As part of our reforms, the Local Housing Allowance, a flat rate allowance based on household locations, family size and income, is being tested in nine pathfinder areas, including Edinburgh; the pathfinder went live on the 9 February 2004 and will run for two years.

Mr. Roy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on housing benefit reforms in Scotland. [160257]

Chris Pond: The Housing Benefit Reform Programme was launched in October 2002. Building on improvements in the administration of Housing Benefit, the overall aims of the reforms are to promote choice and responsibility, enhance work incentives, and reduce levels of fraud and error.

The first stage was to improve administration and this is well under way. For example, between October 2002 and April 2003 we introduced a streamlined Housing Benefit reclaiming process after short periods of work, similar to the arrangements introduced for Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support in October 2001. From April 2004, we will remove the need for customers to make a new Housing Benefit claim when moving from benefit into work. Instead, this will be treated as a change in circumstances.

The second stage is restructuring benefit support for people on low incomes. We have now introduced the 'Local Housing Allowance' in nine Pathfinder areas across Great Britain, including one in Edinburgh, which went live on the 9 February 2004. This is a flat rate allowance based on household location, family size and income. There will be a comprehensive and independent evaluation of the reforms.

Child Support Agency

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many caseworkers are employed by the Child Support Agency, broken down by region. [162167]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Mike Isaac to Mr. Jon Trickett dated 29 March 2004:

In reply to your recent parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of state promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. As he is currently on leave I am replying on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many caseworkers are employed by the Child Support Agency, broken down by region.

The Agency conducts its business through six business units. Their geographical boundaries are described in the Agency's Business Plan. The Business Plan for 2003/04 was placed in the library of the House of Commons on 29 April 2003. The following staff are employed as caseworkers in each of these business units.

Business Unit	Number of Staff
Scotland and North East	888
Wales and North West	877
Eastern	868
South West	754
Midlands	837
South East	699

Child Tax Credit

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what correspondence his Department has sent to families relating to the transfer of the child elements of jobseeker's allowance and income support to child tax credit payments; and if he will place copies in the Library. [159702]

Mr. Pond: We have written to all families on Income Support and income-based Jobseeker's Allowance in the last six months, explaining how the transfer of the child elements of their benefit to the Child Tax Credit will affect them.

A copy of the letter is available in the Library.

Company Cars (Child Support)

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will amend the regulations for the Child Support Agency so that payments given by firms to staff to enable them to obtain a car for company business are excluded as income when calculating maintenance payments; and if he will make a statement; [162003]

(2) whether the value of a company car provided by firms is counted as income by the Child Support Agency when calculating maintenance payments; and if he will make a statement. [162006]

Mr. Pond: Child Support regulations already provide for payments for expenses which are

"wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred in the performance of the duties of the employment"

to be disregarded for the purposes of maintenance calculations.

Neither does the value of a company car count as income for such purposes.

Departmental Communications

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total expenditure on communications for his Department has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158210]

Maria Eagle: The Department's expenditure on communications staff for 2003–04 is forecast to be £11,476,086. This is broken down as follows:

(a) All GICS staff: £3,982,932

(b) Other staff:

(i) Press Officers £1,501,415 (GICS: £976,388—also included in figure in section a. Non GICS: 525,027)

(ii) Special Advisers. The Special Advisers' Code of Conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister. This includes communications activity. Details of the costs of Special Advisers are given on an annual basis. Information for the financial year 2003–04 will be published shortly.

(iii) Others: £6,968,127

"Others" includes all staff working in the Communications teams of DWP, Jobcentre Plus, The Pension Service, Child Support Agency; The Appeals Service and Human Resources. Their work includes: marketing (national and regional); media relations; internal communications; communication standards; information services, ie the Library, Public Enquiry Office and Knowledge Management team; intranet; internet; Planning and Finance and other support staff).

The figures are based on average monthly salary costs for staff working in recognised communication functions. The figures do not cover all of the support staff working to communication staff in the regions as this exact figure is not known. More precise figures are not possible as not all of this information is held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Ethnic Minority Employment

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of civil servants in his Department are of Asian origin. [163681]

Maria Eagle: Based on information provided by those staff who responded to ethnicity surveys 4.2 per cent. of the Department's total staff at 29 February 2004 were of Asian origin.

Participation in the surveys is voluntary.

EU Accession States

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he had with the European Commission concerning his proposals on the application of the benefit system to citizens of EU accession states working in the UK from 1 May onwards. [161401]

Mr. Pond: There have been no discussions with the EU Commission regarding the application of the benefit system to EU accession state nationals. Each member state is responsible for its own social security legislation and there is no requirement for Ministers to discuss changes with the commission.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 584–85W, on EU accession countries, when legislation will be brought forward on the arrangements governing the entitlement to benefits of citizens of EU accession states; whether it will be primary legislation; and whether such legislation will apply to citizens of EU accession states who are in legal employment in the UK prior to 1 May; [161425]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 584–85W, on EU accession countries, what definition of working legally without interruption will be used in relation to the entitlement of citizens of EU accession states to the full range of benefits after 12 months; [161426]

(3) pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 584–85W, on EU accession countries, whether citizens of EU accession states will be entitled to claim *(a)* tax credits and child benefit and *(b)* housing benefit and council tax benefit if they are on low income, from the commencement of their legal employment in the UK. [161427]

Mr. Pond: We intend to lay regulations before Parliament prior to 1 May that will make it a requirement for nationals of Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia to have the right to reside in the UK in order to claim income-related benefits.

The Home Office will bring forward regulations shortly, regulating access to the UK labour market for EU accession state nationals, which will set out the circumstances under which they will be defined as legally working in the UK.

Workers from the EU accession states who are working legally in the UK may, subject to the normal rules, be eligible for housing benefit, council tax benefit, child benefit and tax credits from the start of their legal employment in the UK.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what grants were awarded to *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley by his Department in each of the last three years that fall outside the revenue support grant. [157253]

Mr. Pond: The Department for Work and Pensions pays grants to individual local authorities, rather than the county, therefore there are no figures of funding paid to Lancashire. However, the following table shows payments made in respect of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit administration to all the local authorities within Lancashire, including Chorley.

Payments made in respect of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit administration to local authorities in Lancashire

2001–02

£

Authority	*Housing Benefit*	*Council Tax Benefit*
Blackburn with Darwen	240,595	247,123
Blackpool	373,567	235,413
Burnley	174,315	127,130
Chorley	100,743	99,509
Fylde	83,866	59,568
Hyndburn	129,842	117,234
Lancaster	215,292	158,685
Pendle	114,019	108,291
Preston	218,990	200,902
Ribble Valley	31,545	32,094
Rossendale	88,990	87,089
South Ribble	99,727	87,196
West Lancashire	131,420	151,054
Wyre	132,028	93,021
Total	2,134,939	1,804,309

2002–03

£

Authority	*Housing Benefit*	*Council Tax Benefit*	*Pension Credit/New Tax Credit Set-up*
Blackburn with Darwen	331,141	253,899	69,435
Blackpool	402,393	250,099	75,691
Burnley	181,377	138,010	42,124
Chorley	105,067	102,465	30,834
Fylde	92,439	62,171	25,574
Hyndburn	132,220	120,417	35,331
Lancaster	210,295	161,372	47,170
Pendle	128,827	125,996	35,797
Preston	202,377	196,520	44,391
Ribble Valley	33,097	33,746	16,718
Rossendale	91,393	87,927	27,973
South Ribble	107,632	90,286	29,906
West Lancashire	131,613	150,871	38,267
Wyre	134,328	107,525	34,355
Total	2,284,199	1,881,304	553,566

2003–04

£

Authority	*Housing Benefit*	*Council Tax Benefit*	*New Tax Credit*	*Pension Credit*	*New Tax Credit-special provision*	*Pension Credit Set-up*
Blackburn with Darwen	671,852	493,065	36,851	80,123	10,050	15,841
Blackpool	883,229	520,812	44,471	100,128	12,128	18,600
Burnley	450,336	300,367	23,808	55,492	6,493	11,119
Chorley	222,698	210,433	13,712	42,146	3,740	7,464
Fylde	191,921	126,467	10,078	30,255	2,748	6,148
Hyndburn	310,988	261,308	18,141	47,450	4,947	9,067
Lancaster	450,406	328,724	24,668	65,083	6,728	11,430
Pendle	292,769	275,667	18,014	49,208	4,913	9,022
Preston	446,490	390,722	26,507	69,737	7,229	12,096
Ribble Valley	70,656	68,923	4,419	15,535	1,205	4,100
Rossendale	184,444	177,927	11,466	38,042	3,127	6,651
South Ribble	218,022	182,068	12,660	39,154	3,453	7,083
West Lancashire	275,538	308,280	18,480	63,352	5,040	9,190
Wyre	284,734	238,517	16,575	49,325	4,520	8,500
Total	4,954,083	3,883,280	279,850	745,030	76,321	136,311

Note:
Prior to 2003–04, the Department for Work and Pensions distributed half of the available grant for administration costs for Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit. The other half was distributed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Executive. From 2003–04 these two elements were brought together, with DWP distributing the total amount of the grant.
Source:
DWP Data.

Additional payments have been made under the Performance Standards Fund and the Help Fund.

The Performance Standards describe action needed to administer Housing Benefit effectively and securely, and address all aspects of administration. A three year fund of £200 million has been available since April 2003 to help local authorities achieve these standards. The Performance Standards Fund provides substantial help through, for example, investment in recruitment, training and better IT. 254 local authorities have already benefited from the first awards which are worth a total of £47 million. The local authorities range from small districts to large metropolitan councils across England, Scotland and Wales.

Performance Standards Fund

£

Authority	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Blackburn with Darwen	—	119,488
Blackpool	—	40,833
Lancaster	—	80,257
Rossendale	20,030	244,539
West Lancashire	—	43,357
Wyre	—	117,557

In 2001–02 a Help Fund award of £132,114.00 was made to Pendle, the lead authority for the Lancashire Benefits Consortium. This was a multiple bid with the following authorities: Burnley, Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Lancaster, Preston, Ribble Valley, Rossendale and Wyre.

In 2002–03, Help Fund awards were made to Blackpool of £29,554.40 (this was for two separate bids, one of £3,554.40, and one of £26,000.00), Lancaster was awarded £28,500.00, and Pendle was awarded £35,000.00 (this was a single authority bid).

Blackpool was also awarded a payment of £18,739 in November 2003 to cover the start-up costs incurred as a Standard Local Housing Allowance Pathfinder authority.

Habitual Residence Test

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in what way the habitual residence test for the purposes of claiming benefits on the part of citizens of EU accession states working in the UK from 1 May onwards will differ from the habitual residence test for the purposes of the income tax regime applicable to such workers. [161400]

Mr. Pond: The habitual residence test that is used to determine eligibility for benefits by this Department is unrelated to measures used by the Inland Revenue to determine liability for income tax. There is no habitual residence test for income tax.

Health and Safety at Work

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will contribute to activities in relation to Workers Memorial Day on 28 April to help raise awareness of health and safety issues within the workplace. [161234]

Mr. Browne: I agree that as Minister for Work it is important I give my support for International Workers Memorial Day on 28 April.

We must remember and pay tribute to the men and women who have been killed, injured or made ill by work. We should not forget them and the Memorial Day is an opportunity for many people to think about those they have lost. For those of us who are engaged with keeping workers safe and healthy the Workers Memorial Day reminds us of the need to continue improving workplace health and safety.

I will be writing to Brendan Barber, General Secretary of the TUC, in support of the many activities trade unions are organising for the day. The TUC's online 'Book of Remembrance' is an innovative and moving initiative and I commend everybody to read it.

Our continuing aim is, of course, to reduce the number of workers that we remember with sadness.

Incapacity Benefit

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what criteria he will apply to determine whether incapacity benefit needs to be reviewed as part of the Pathway to Work scheme; and if he will make a statement. [162868]

Maria Eagle: The Pathways to Work pilots are intended to provide much greater levels of encouragement and assistance to claimants of incapacity benefits in order to enable greater numbers to realise their aspirations of getting back to work. As part of these pilots we are ensuring the initial Personal Capability Assessment (PCA) is completed in a more timely manner than at present, to fit more appropriately with the work-related support we are offering. However, there are no changes to the nature of the PCA assessment for benefit purposes, the threshold for satisfying the PCA, or the way in which PCA review dates are set.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of people from whom incapacity benefit will be removed during the next year; and if he will make a statement. [163553]

Maria Eagle: People may cease to receive Incapacity Benefit (IB) for a number of reasons, including an improvement in their condition or a return to work.

We have made no estimate of the number of people who will cease to be entitled to IB during the next year.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list in relation to incapacity benefit the sub-categories of payment made on mental health grounds. [163692]

Maria Eagle: Entitlement to Incapacity Benefit (IB) is not based on any particular diagnosis; instead, it is based on a functional assessment of how a person's medical condition or disability affects their ability to perform day-to-day activities related to work. There are no sub-categories of IB payment that are related to the claimant's condition.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether Jobcentre Plus has an incentive payments system to encourage senior managers to employ more people with disabilities; and if he will make a statement. [163696]

Maria Eagle: Jobcentre Plus is positive about employing disabled people. The Agency, as part of the Department for Work and Pensions, operates a guaranteed interview scheme, and has aspirational targets for the number of disabled people it employs in middle and senior management. Later this year, the Department intends to improve its data on the number of disabled people it employs by re-surveying all our staff. There is no incentive payment system to encourage senior managers to employ more disabled people.

Jobcentre Plus

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many full-time equivalent staff have been employed by *(a)* Jobcentres and *(b)* Jobcentre Plus in each year since 1997; and how many unemployed people were served by those jobcentres in each year since 1997. [162976]

Mr. Browne: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to my hon. Friend.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Hugh Bayley, dated 29 March 2004:

As Jobcentre Plus is an Executive Agency, the Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many full-time equivalent staff have been employed by jobcentres and subsequently Jobcentre Plus in each year since 1997; and how many unemployed people were served by those jobcentres in each year since 1997. This is something, which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of the Agency.

The information you have asked for can be found in the table below.

Year	*Staff (FTE) at 30 April*	*Unemployed at May*
Employment Service		
1997	31,550	1,562,400
1998	30,796	1,295,800
1999	32,675	1,224,500
2000	32,620	1,067,300
2001	34,110	942,000
Jobcentre Plus		
2002	85,020	918,500
2003	80,170	924,000
2004	81,781 (as at 31 January 2004)	—

Source:
Civil Service Statistics and Nomis

It may be helpful if I explain that Jobcentre Plus came into existence in April 2002, bringing together staff from the Employment Service and part of the Benefits Agency. It deals with both claims and payments of all working age benefits as well as job-finding activities. Data on staff is collected by grade rather than job role and it is not possible to identify accurately the number of staff working in front facing customer service posts from this information.

Partnerships Against Poverty

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Partnership against Poverty Scotland in relation to its aims; and if he will make a statement. [163698]

Mr. Pond: The Partnerships Against Poverty Forum for Scotland was established in 2000 with the following terms of reference:

to draw together the DWP Pension Service, local authorities, major voluntary organisations and organisations representing ethnic minority pensioners to evaluate existing work on the take-up of social security benefits;

to consider new initiatives and to help inform the development of a co-ordinated approach to benefit take-up;

to contribute to the development of new business processes, training, forms and leaflets to encourage take-up;

to identify and address barriers to take-up;

to consider which organisations are best placed to lead on take-up initiatives and to consider resourcing of initiatives.

The group normally meets four times a year and has taken an active role in the review and development of claim forms and information leaflets for Minimum Income Guarantee, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and, most recently, Pension Credit. The group has also been influential in the development of short version application forms and simplified customer service and business processes for older people's services; and in the development of new initiatives to promote benefit take-up. The group have also been positively involved in research into the delivery of services to ethnic minority communities and supportive in the development of policies and strategies to address the issues raised.

All parties involved value the opportunity to work in partnership to develop the most effective solutions to the issue of poverty among older people.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what funding his Department granted to Partnership against Poverty Scotland in each year since 1997; and how many people it employed in each year. [163704]

Mr. Pond: The Partnerships Against Poverty Forum for Scotland was established in 2000 and does not receive any funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), neither does the group employ any staff.

Administrative support for the group is provided by DWP which also provides refreshments and a location for meetings.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the aims are of Partnerships Against Poverty England and Wales; what assessment he has made of its effectiveness against those aims; and if he will make a statement. [163702]

Mr. Pond: The Partnerships Against Poverty Forum for England and Wales was established in 2000 with the following terms of reference:

to draw together the DWP Pension Service, local authorities, major voluntary organisations and organisations representing ethnic minority pensioners to evaluate existing work on the take-up of social security benefits;

to consider new initiatives and to help inform the development of a co-ordinated approach to benefit take-up;

to contribute to the development of new business processes, training, forms and leaflets to encourage take-up;

to identify and address barriers to take-up;

to consider which organisations are best placed to lead on take-up initiatives and to consider resourcing of initiatives.

The group normally meets four times a year and has taken an active role in the review and development of claim forms and information leaflets for Minimum Income Guarantee, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and, most recently, Pension Credit. The group has also been influential in the development of short version application forms and simplified customer service and business processes for older people's services; and in the development of new initiatives to promote benefit take-up.

The group has also been positively involved in research into the delivery of services to ethnic minority communities and supportive in the development of policies and strategies to address the issues raised.

All parties involved value the opportunity to work in partnership to develop the most effective solutions to the issue of poverty among older people.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what funding his Department granted to Partnerships Against Poverty England and Wales in each year since 1997; and how many people it employed in each year. [163705]

Mr. Pond: The Partnerships Against Poverty Forum for England and Wales was established in 2000 and does not receive any funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), neither does the group employ any staff.

Administrative support for the group is provided by DWP which also provides refreshments and a location for meetings.

Pension Credit

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what requests for resources relate to the administration costs of the pension credit; [164268]

(2) what plans he has to collate information on the cost of administering pension credit. [164269]

Malcolm Wicks: Provision for the administration costs of pension credit is included in Request for Resources 3 of the Department's 2003–04 Supply Estimate, "Combating poverty and promoting security and independence in retirement for today's and tomorrow's pensioners", as amended by the 2003–04 Spring Supplementary Estimate. This is available in the Library.

The Department is developing a resource management system which will include the provision of activity based information. The aim is to implement the system from September 2005 and detailed implementation plans will be produced as part of the development phase of the project. Decisions on whether the activity based information will identify the specific administration costs of pension credit cases will be made as part of the Resource Management Project.

Poverty Threshold

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many *(a)* families and *(b)* children in (i) the UK and (ii) Cheltenham have ceased to live below the poverty threshold since 1997; [164298]

(2) how many *(a)* families and *(b)* children in (i) the UK and (ii) Cheltenham he estimates are living below the poverty threshold. [164299]

Mr. Pond: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend, the Member for City of York (Hugh Bayley) on 8 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 462W.

Sure Start Maternity Grant

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many mothers in Greater London, broken down by borough, have taken up the Sure Start maternity grant. [163762]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* The information is not available.

Note:

1. Social Fund data is held on the Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System (PBMIS). PBMIS does not hold data broken down by borough or for the Greater London area.

Underoccupation

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) whether he has commissioned a final assessment of the pilot underoccupier incentive scheme in Croydon, Haringey and Newham; [156773]

(2) how many tenants who traded down in *(a)* Croydon, *(b)* Haringey and *(c)* Newham received a social security payment to reduce underoccupation as part of the pilot underoccupier incentive scheme. [156774]

Mr. Pond: The pilot underoccupier incentive scheme was discontinued after the evaluation of the first full year in 2001. No further assessment of the scheme was commissioned.

The evaluation of the first full year of the scheme was published as "Evaluation of Department for Work and Pensions Underoccupier Incentive Scheme" In-House Report No. 99, April 2002. Figures for the number of tenants trading down were included in the report.

Websites

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost in *(a)* financial and *(b)* other terms was in (i) each financial year since 1997 and (ii) 2003–04 until the latest date for which figures are available of (A) developing and (B) maintaining (1) his Department's website and (2) each website for which his Department is responsible; and how many (C) unique hosts and (D) hits there were in each month for each website in (iii) each financial year since 1997 and (iv) 2003–04 until the latest date for which numbers are available. [155851]

Maria Eagle: Development for the DWP website, agency and other campaign websites is carried out by the Department's own in-house web team who are responsible for production, management and maintenance of all sites.

Contracted and quantifiable costs are included, where available, in the following information. It is not possible to quantify internal costs for each site.

The department's IT contractor provides hosting of departmental sites, and provision of web hosting services. However, internet services are not accounted for separately and it is not possible to disentangle these costs. Web hosting is included within the quantified maintenance costs for the Jobcentre Plus and Worktrain websites.

The following tables provide a list of all departmental sites showing hits on a monthly basis from January 2003.

Total annual hits for the main departmental sites over the last four years, together with quantifiable development and maintenance costs, are as follows:

DWP www.dwp.gov.uk

	Annual hits	*Development*	*Maintenance*
2002–03	22,394,004		
2001–02	[1] 20,004,808	48,143	
2000–01	36,415,365		
1999–2000	32,487,969	152,000	
1998–99	21,980,416		

[1] launch of Jobcentre Plus and Pensions Service websites.

Note:
The Department's website was launched in June 2001 and replaced the former Department of Social Security site www.dss.gov.uk

CSA www.csa.gov.uk

	Annual hits	*Development*	*Maintenance*
2002–03	7,888,168		
2001–02	[1] 7,171,168		

[1] Unavailable prior to these dates.

Jobcentre Plus www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

	Annual hits	*Development*	*Maintenance*
2003–04	[1] 458,762,980	1,048,089	385,992
2002–03	553,074,373	492,730	270,555
2001–02	[2] 651,548	153,961	113,368

[1] to date
[2] launched October 2001.

The Pension Service www.thepensionservice.gov.uk

	Annual hits	*Development*	*Maintenance*
2003–04	[1] 37,713,725	186,950	
2002–03	31,389,060	188,093	
2001–02	[2] 217,556	237,577	

[1] to date
[2] launched November 2001.

Worktrain www.worktrain.gov.uk

	Annual hits	*Development*	[1] *Maintenance*
2003–04	[2] 431,904,963	1,362,057	847,838
2001–02	417,416,769	1,942,769	1,022,764
2000–01	206,974,112	1,725,827	1,072,118
1999–2000	[3] 13,435,679	1,511,487	639,766
1998–99		59,422	

[1] maintenance and development costs incorporates Worktrain For Advisers.
[2] to date
[3] launched March 2001.

Worktrain www.worktrainforadvisers.gov.uk

	Annual hits	*Development*	*Maintenance*
2003–04	[1] 677,306	[3]—	[3]—
2001–02	[2] 109,596	[3]—	[3]—

[1] to date
[2] launched September 2002.
[3] maintenance and development costs incorporated with Worktrain.

Winter Fuel Payment

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of senior citizens in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each Greater London borough received the winter fuel allowance in each year since its inception. [163725]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of people in Greater London and each Greater London local authority who have received a Winter Fuel Payment since winter 1999–2000 is in the table. Figures for previous years are not available. We are not able to provide an accurate estimate of the percentage of people receiving a Winter Fuel Payment.

Winter Fuel Payment recipients, winter 1999–2000 to 2003–04

Region/Local authority	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*Winter 2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
London GOR	1,012,790	1,084,350	1,080,395	1,082,400	1,071,295
Inner London—West	119,940	125,585	124,715	124,865	123,170
Camden	24,920	26,160	25,835	25,815	25,470
City of London	1,030	1,080	1,035	1,060	1,055
Hammersmith and Fulham	18,845	19,760	19,765	19,785	19,470
Kensington and Chelsea	17,315	18,330	18,385	18,740	18,670
Wandsworth	32,775	34,320	33,805	33,525	32,950
Westminster	25,055	25,935	25,890	25,940	25,560
Inner London—East	207,580	217,740	215,230	214,035	210,295
Hackney	21,510	22,365	22,055	21,985	21,505
Haringey	25,090	26,830	26,820	26,965	26,670
Islington	21,680	22,615	22,435	22,335	22,090
Lambeth	29,015	30,535	30,145	29,990	29,575
Lewisham	32,770	34,545	34,225	34,235	33,720
Newham	26,190	27,800	27,320	26,955	26,460
Southwark	28,790	29,930	29,570	29,295	28,650
Tower Hamlets	22,525	23,110	22,665	22,275	21,625
Outer London—East and North East	252,050	272,715	271,755	271,850	269,280
Barking and Dagenham	27,035	28,510	27,895	27,495	26,685
Bexley	39,125	43,250	43,185	43,565	43,560
Enfield	42,470	45,970	46,030	46,205	45,810
Greenwich	31,410	33,475	33,235	33,015	32,475
Havering	44,245	48,570	48,705	48,990	49,070
Redbridge	37,130	40,160	40,285	40,290	39,905
Waltham Forest	30,635	32,780	32,415	32,285	31,770
Outer London—South	182,720	197,655	198,030	199,130	197,990
Bromley	55,815	60,630	60,840	61,515	61,385
Croydon	48,260	52,395	52,710	52,990	52,860
Kingston upon Thames	22,225	23,830	23,830	23,910	23,650
Merton	26,775	28,595	28,405	28,395	27,945
Sutton	29,650	32,205	32,245	32,320	32,145
Outer London—West and North West	250,505	270,650	270,665	272,520	270,565
Barnet	49,805	53,090	52,855	53,315	52,875
Brent	33,105	35,905	36,155	36,670	36,540
Ealing	39,360	42,435	42,475	42,710	42,350
Harrow	33,680	36,765	36,930	37,250	37,215
Hillingdon	38,575	42,015	41,930	42,055	41,710
Hounslow	28,820	31,310	31,320	31,455	31,090
Richmond upon Thames	27,155	29,130	29,000	29,065	28,780

Notes:
1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Please note that these figures for 2003–04 refer only to the main payment run ie they do not include the late payment run figures .We estimate that there are approximately 100,000 people in Great Britain paid via late payment runs (0.8 per cent. of all payments). However, since late payment runs are mainly in respect of non-system cases whose claim had not been received by qualifying week, they are heavily skewed towards men aged 60.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in the Stroud constituency have benefited from the winter fuel allowance in each year since its inception. [164168]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of people in the Stroud constituency who have received a Winter Fuel Payment since winter 1999–2000 is in the table. Figures for previous years are not available.

Stroud constituency: winter fuel payment

	Payments made
1999–2000	19,625
2000–01	21,695
2001–02	22,015
2002–03	22,535
2003–04	22,815

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Please note that these figures for 2003–04 refer only to the main payment run i.e. they do not include the late payment run figures. We estimate that there are approximately 100,000 people in Great Britain paid via late payment runs (0.8 per cent. of all payments). However, since late payment runs are mainly in respect of non-system cases whose claim had not been received by Qualifying Week, they are heavily skewed towards men aged 60.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample.

Working at Height Regulations

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received from mountaineering organisations in relation to the Health and Safety Executive's proposed regulation for working at height; and if he will make a statement. [163422]

Mr. Browne: My right hon. Friend has received 11 letters in the past year with regard to the impact of proposed Work at Height Regulations on outdoor activities, such as climbing, caving, hill walking, and mountaineering. None of these letters were sent by mountaineering organisations, although two of the letters expressed specific concern about how the proposed regulations would impact on mountaineering.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what research his Department has conducted into the impact of the Health and Safety Executive's proposed regulation for working at height upon *(a)* mountaineering, *(b)* hill walking, *(c)* abseiling, *(d)* rock climbing and *(e)* caving; and if he will make a statement. [163423]

Mr. Browne: HSE has sanctioned research to identify some generic principles for risk assessment and decision-making relating to rope working in mountaineering, caving and similar activities.

However, the regulations are expected to have little impact on these activities where the organisations concerned fully comply with the existing standards and practices laid down by their governing bodies.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the impact of the Health and Safety Executive's proposed regulations for working at height on the rural economy; and if he will make a statement. [163424]

Mr. Browne: While the impact on the rural economy has not been estimated, the Regulatory Impact Assessment for the Work at Height Regulations states that 'the costs per business are only around £100 per year'. However, it is worth noting that falls from height are the second largest factor in work place fatalities in the agricultural sector, resulting in 75 fatalities in the past 10 years, and such accidents damage the viability of rural businesses.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Mortgages

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many heads of households *(a)* below and *(b)* above retirement age had a mortgage on the latest date for which figures are available. [164205]

Keith Hill: Using data from the Survey of English Housing (SEH) for the first three-quarters of the 2003–04, the estimated number of household reference persons[1] (HRPs) in England that have a mortgage and are *(a)* below retirement age was 8,196,000 (55 per cent. of HRPs in this age group), *(b)* above retirement age was 307,000 (5 per cent. of HRPs in this age group).

[1] The figures provided relate to household reference persons rather than to head of households as in the question because from April 2001 the SEH in common with other Government surveys replaced the traditional concept of the "head of the household" by "household reference person". This is the householder with the highest income. The definition of the household reference person, unlike the old head of household definition, no longer gives automatic priority to male partners.

Balance of Funding Review

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment has been made as part of the current Balance of Funding Review of the conclusions of the Layfield Committee's report in 1974 concerning a combination of property tax and income tax. [164544]

Phil Hope: The remit of the Balance of Funding Review is to review all aspects of the balance of funding, review the evidence, and look at reform options. Evidence presented by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy to the Review Steering Group on 4 March has looked at many of the practical details of a possible local income tax, including some of the effects of combining it with council tax.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what measures have been taken to ensure that the Balance of Funding Review in England and the concurrent review commissioned in Wales by the Welsh Assembly Government co-operate effectively where appropriate. [164545]

Phil Hope: An observer for the Welsh Assembly Government sits at meetings of the Balance of Funding Review in England. The two reviews are sharing material where appropriate.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment has been made in the Balance of Funding Review of a local income tax on individuals differentiated by income and property value. [164546]

Phil Hope: The Balance of Funding Review Steering Group has heard evidence on the pros and cons of a number of options for reform raised in its public consultation. It heard from the New Policy Institute on 15 January on possible reforms to council tax, and from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy on 4 March on the introduction of a local income tax.

Car Parking

Mr. Chope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the research on car parking in sustainable environments will be published; and if he will make a statement. [164273]

Yvette Cooper: This research is due to be completed by the end of April. Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will then make arrangements for making it publicly available. This report is intended to assist local authorities in setting appropriate standards that can deliver well-designed sustainable residential environments, in both rural and urban areas, as is required by PPG3.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also intends that key messages in this report will form part of the revised guidance on the design and layout of residential streets, which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Department for Transport will jointly produce.

Correspondence

Mr. Heath: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library his letter to the chairman of the Electoral Commission dated 22 March. [164341]

Mr. Raynsford: A copy of the letter was placed in the Library of both Houses on Thursday 25 March 2004.

Council Houses

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many empty council house properties there are in North Tyneside. [164415]

Keith Hill: The position on empty council houses in North Tyneside as at week ending 21 March 2004 is as follows.

	Voids
Category 1 and 2 Voids[1]	200
Category 3 Voids[2]	30
Difficult to Let	137
Long Term Voids[3]	96
Total Number	463

[1] Minor/major repairs

[2] Major repairs

[3] Held for disposal, demolition, decant, suspended, etc.

Note:

This represents 2.66 per cent. of total stock

Department-Sponsored Bodies

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* total budget, *(b)* funding from his Department, *(c)* administration budget and *(d)* staff cost to his Department for the review of the needs indices used in the allocation of housing capital resources to local authorities and registered social landlords were for financial years (i) 2002–03 and (ii) 2003–04; and if he will make a statement on the (A) current and (B) future work of the review. [163637]

Keith Hill: The staff and other costs of the regular updating and periodic review of the needs indices used in the allocation of housing capital resources are not identified separately from other activity on allocation of housing capital resources. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be looking at the future role and development of these indices in the 2004 Spending Review.

Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority

Mr. Luff: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his estimate is of the effective increase in the Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority's precept for the next financial year; and if he will cap the authority. [164243]

Mr. Raynsford: Alternative notional amounts for the 2003–04 budgets of authorities affected by combined fire authorities precepting for the first time in 2004–05 were laid in Parliament on 25 March in the "Limitation of Council Tax and Precepts (Alternative Notional Amounts) Report (England) 2004/05". The report is subject to the approval of Parliament.

In the case of the Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority, the alternative notional amount shown in the draft report equals the figure shown in "Fire Service Circular 7/2004", issued on 24 February 2004. Circular 7/2004 also stated the corresponding indicative Band D council tax for the authority for 2003–04 as £46.54.

The Band D council tax set by the Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority for 2004–05 is £60.21. This was published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 25 March in Table 2 of "News Release 2004/0069" at: http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/ctax/ctax045.htm

We need to consider the 2004–05 budget information that we have received from local authorities before taking decisions on capping. We aim to notify authorities that may be in line for capping by the end of April.

Homeless People

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people in London were *(a)* rough sleepers, *(b)* sleeping in hostels and *(c)* in homeless accommodation in the last period for which information is available. [163523]

Yvette Cooper: The latest local authority Housing Investment Programme returns for spring 2003 show that there were 267 rough sleepers in London.

The number of people sleeping in hostels is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, latest information shows that there are around 19,000 hostel bed spaces in London where typically there is 95 per cent. occupancy on any single night.

The latest statutory homelessness statistical returns for December 2003 show that in London there were 57,410 homeless households in all forms of temporary accommodation.

House Buyers (Protection)

Mr. Todd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to increase the protection afforded to purchasers of new homes; and if he will make a statement. [163914]

Keith Hill: Almost all new home buyers have protection under new home warranty schemes, in addition to any other contractual, statutory or common law rights they may have. The Home Information Pack will ensure that prospective buyers of new homes have good information on such matters as contract terms and warranty cover before they decide whether to go ahead with the purchase.

In addition, the final report of the Barker Review of Housing Supply sets out a series of challenging reform proposals to the house building industry to increase customer satisfaction, tackle skills shortages, increase the flow of new houses on to the market and improve design and the use of modern methods of construction. The Government and the industry must work together in partnership to deliver these reforms. The Government will review progress made by summer 2005.

Housing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what studies his Department is conducting into tenant satisfaction *(a)* in council housing, *(b)* in registered social landlord housing and *(c)* (i) before

and (ii) after transfer in large scale voluntary transfers; and if he will publish the figures for tenant satisfaction. [162713]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has published data for tenant satisfaction *(a)* in council housing, *(b)* in registered social landlord housing and *(c)* (i) before and (ii) after transfer in large scale voluntary transfers.

The data has been derived from the Survey of English Housing and is available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

The path to reach the Survey of English Housing section of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website for data on tenant satisfaction in *(a)* council housing and *(b)* registered social landlord housing is:

Home > Housing > Housing research > Housing surveys > Survey of English Housing > Live tables > Satisfaction with landlord > Tables

The path to reach the Survey of English Housing section of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website for data on tenant satisfaction in (i) before and (ii) after transfer in large scale voluntary transfers is:

Home > Housing > Housing research > Housing surveys > Survey of English Housing > Live tables > Social renters > Tables S407, S408 and S455.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many tenants' ballots on housing transfer have been held since 1999; where each ballot was held (1) what percentage of tenants voted; and what the percentage *(a)* for and *(b)* against (i) large scale voluntary transfer and (ii) arm's length management organisation was in each case; [162767]

(2) what percentage of tenants voted in each of the ballots on large scale voluntary transfer and arm's length management since 1999; and in each case, what the percentage voting in favour was as a proportion of the total number of tenants eligible. [162934]

Keith Hill: There have been 133 tenants ballots for transfer and 25 tenants ballots for Arms Length Management (ALMO) since 1999. Details are tabled.

Large scale voluntary transfers since 1999

Local Authority	*Ballot turnout percentage*	*In favour percentage*	*Against percentage*	*Percentage in favour as a proportion of those eligible to vote*	*Percentage against as a proportion of those eligible to vote*
Allerdale BC	76	93	7	71	5
Allerdale BC Salterbeck	76	96	4	73	3
Amber Valley BC	72	57	43	41	31
Barnsley	84	48	52	40	44
Bath and North East Somerset C	71	58	42	41	30
Birmingham	66	33	67	22	44
Birmingham C Central Areas	64	62	38	40	24
Blackburn with Darwen BC	62	85	15	53	9
Boston BC	76	60	40	46	30
Bradford—Thorpe Edge	84	38	62	32	52
Bromsgrove	68	68	32	46	22
Burnley BC	75	91	9	68	7
Calderdale MBC	62	68	32	42	20
Cambridge	72	40	61	28	44
Carlisle CC	67	52	48	35	32
Chelmsford BC	78	56	44	44	35
Cherwell	73	59	41	43	30
Chester CC	69	67	33	46	23
Chichester DC	74	81	19	60	14
City of Bradford	66	62	38	41	25
Copeland	60	78	22	47	13
County of Herefordshire C	73	58	42	42	31
Coventry CC	58	55	45	32	26
Craven DC	80	76	24	60	19
Crewe and Nantwich BC	73	65	35	47	26
Derbyshire Dales	715	69	31	53	23
Dudley	70	44	56	31	39
Ealing Havelock	78	48	52	37	41
East Hertfordshire DC	76	78	22	59	16
East Hertfordshire DC	73	75	25	55	18
East Lindsey DC	85	60	40	51	34
East Northamptonshire DC	75	92	8	69	6
East Staffordshire BC	66	78	23	51	15
Elmbridge BC	73	66	34	48	25
Erewash BC	71	75	25	53	18
Fareham	77	50	50	38	39
Fenland	72	36	64	26	46
Forest Heath	72	58	42	42	30
Forest of Dean DC	74	69	31	51	23
Fylde BC	75	74	26	56	20
Hartlepool	70	75	25	53	18
Horsham DC	74	63	37	46	27
Huntingdon DC	63	75	25	47	16

Large scale voluntary transfers since 1999

Local Authority	*Ballot turnout percentage*	*In favour percentage*	*Against percentage*	*Percentage in favour as a proportion of those eligible to vote*	*Percentage against as a proportion of those eligible to vote*
Knowsley MBC	59	74	26	44	15
LB Enfield	78	82	18	64	14
LB Greenwich Charlton Triangle	76	84	16	64	12
LB Hackney Upper Clapton	76	66	34	50	26
LB Hackney Sheltered Stock	91	70	30	64	27
LB Hackney Haggerston	80	59	41	47	33
LB Hackney Morningside	73	63	37	46	27
LB Hackney Kings Crescent	85	79	21	67	18
LB Hackney Pembury Estate	79	83	17	66	13
LB Hackney Stamford Hill	83	60	40	50	33
LB Hammersmith and Fulham Old Oak	83	83	17	69	14
LB Harrow	78	75	25	58	20
LB Islington Ten Estates	78	80	20	62	16
LB Islington Barnsbury	73	83	17	61	12
LB Lambeth Central Stockwell	68	71	29	48	20
LB Lambeth St. Martins	67	78	22	52	15
LB Richmond	64	64	36	41	23
LB Tower Hamlets Poplar I	73	75	25	55	18
LB Tower Hamlets THCH	67	52	49	34	32
LB Waltham Forest	65	62	38	40	25
Lewisham	51	30	70	15	35
Liverpool CC Pinehurst	91	67	33	61	30
Liverpool CC Eastern Fringe (Central)	66	88	12	58	8
Liverpool CC Eastern Fringe (South)	68	79	21	54	14
Liverpool CC Eastern Fringe (North)	65	66	34	43	22
Liverpool CC Speke Garston	78	85	15	66	12
Liverpool Kensington	67	61	39	41	26
Maidstone BC	70	61	39	43	27
Manchester CC Darnhill	85	92	8	78	7
Manchester CC (Colshaw Farm)	87	97	3	84	3
Manchester CC (East Manchester)	76	90	10	68	8
Manchester CC Handforth Estate	87	92	8	80	7
Manchester CC Langley Estate	76	90	10	68	7
Manchester CC Sale Estate	82	93	7	76	5
Manchester CC Whitefield Estate	87	95	5	83	4
Manchester CC East Wythenshawe	80	90	10	72	8
Mendip DC	74	65	35	48	26
Merton	66	49	52	32	34
Mid-Bedfordshire DC	73	51	49	37	36
Middlesbrough	60	77	23	46	14
Newcastle Under Lyme BC	74	75	25	56	19
North Devon DC	76	72	28	55	21
North Hertfordshire DC	69	60	40	41	28
Nuneaton and Bedworth	70	40	60	28	42
Oldham MBC Fitton Hill	61	83	17	51	10
Oldham MBC Limeside (Hollins/The Avenues)	71	87	13	62	9
Peterborough	64	82	19	52	12
Preston BC Avenham	82	91	9	75	7
Purbeck	79	70	30	55	24
Redcar and Cleveland BC	71	89	11	63	8
Reigate and Banstead BC	74	80	20	59	15
Restormel BC	80	84	16	67	12
Rushcliffe BC	80	52	48	42	38
Scarborough BC	80	72	28	57	23
Shrewsbury and Atcham BC	75	65	35	49	26
South Bedfordshire	72	28	72	20	52
South Hams DC	82	81	19	66	16
South Norfolk	78	68	32	53	25
South Somerset DC	77	50	50	39	39
Southend on Sea	68	49	51	34	35
Southwark Aylesbury Estate	76	27	73	20	55
St. Edmundsbury	74	71	29	53	21

Large scale voluntary transfers since 1999

Local Authority	*Ballot turnout percentage*	*In favour percentage*	*Against percentage*	*Percentage in favour as a proportion of those eligible to vote*	*Percentage against as a proportion of those eligible to vote*
St. Helens MBC	70	84	16	59	12
Staffordshire Moorlands DC	75	66	34	50	26
Stockport	65	45	55	29	36
Stroud	77	22	78	17	60
Sunderland CC	73	88	12	64	9
Tameside	69	62	38	43	26
Tameside West Ashton	75	64	36	48	27
Tameside MBC	69	64	36	44	25
Teignbridge	81	65	36	52	29
Telford and Wrekin C	74	79	21	58	16
Test Valley BC	73	69	31	50	22
Tollington	71	37	63	26	44
Torbay BC	77	72	28	56	22
Tower Hamlets–Poplar	74	44	56	33	41
Tynedale DC	77	80	20	62	15
Vale Royal BC	72	85	15	61	11
Walsall MBC (Majority of Stock)	71	71	29	50	21
Walsall MBC (Tenant Managed Stock)	63	74	26	47	16
Waverley	78	43	57	34	44
West Devon BC	79	81	19	64	15
West Lindsey DD	77	79	21	61	16
West Oxfordshire DC	77	66	34	51	26
West Wiltshire DC	77	66	34	51	26
Weymouth and Portland C	76	72	28	55	21
Worcester	72	75	25	54	18
Worthing BC	76	69	31	52	24
Wycombe	69	48	52	33	35
Wyre Forest DC	66	80	20	53	13

ALMO Ballots—complete list at 22 March 2004

Local Authority	*Turnout percentage*	*In favour as percentage of votes*	*Against as percentage of votes*	*Percentage in favour as a proportion of those eligible to vote*	*Percentage against as a proportion of those eligible to vote*
ALMO Round 1					
Derby	48	88	12	42	6
Hounslow	35	83	17	29	6
Kirklees	47	81	19	38	9
Rochdale	46	90	10	'41	5
Stockton-on-Tees	44	93	7	41	3
ALMO Round 2					
Barnsley	25	57	43	14	11
Carrick	61	96	4	59	2
Colchester	57	76	24	43	14
Leeds—East	35	83	17	29	6
Leeds—North East	41	88	12	36	5
Leeds—North West	42	89	11	37	5
Leeds—South	39	91	9	35	4
Leeds—South East	40	88	12	35	5
Leeds—West	38	90	10	34	4
Waltham Forest	49	85	15	42	7
ALMO Round 3					
Camden	30	23	77	7	23
High Peak	60	98	2	59	1
Islington	27	85	15	23	4
Sheffield: Brightside and Shiregreen	42	78	22	33	9
Sheffield: Central Area	47	87	13	41	6
South Lakeland	65	88	12	57	8
ALMO Round 4—bids					
Hammersmith and Fulham	40	81	19	32	8
Sheffield: Hillsborough, Nether Thorpe	45	87	13	39	6
Sheffield: Westfield, Hackenthorpe	43	89	11	38	5
Sheffield: Parson Cross, Foxhill, Longley	38	94	6	36	2

Local Government Finance

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1710W, on local government finance (Isle of Wight), what his grant to the Isle of Wight Council was for 2003–04; and what his grant would have been for *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05 had he not accepted the Isle of Wight's argument about the New Earnings Survey sample size. [164435]

Mr. Raynsford: The Isle of Wight Council received £96.318 million in formulae grant in 2003–04.

At the 2003–04 provisional settlement, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister calculated the area cost adjustment (ACA) for the Isle of Wight separately from that of Hampshire. As a result the Isle of Wight had an ACA factor of one. Had the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister continued to calculate the ACA in this way for the 2003–04 and 2004–05 settlements, it is likely that the Island would have continued to receive an ACA factor of one. And correspondingly they would have received less revenue support grant in 2003–04 and 2004–05.

However, precisely quantifying the effect of changing the ACA used in the 2003–04 and 2004–05 settlement can be done only at disproportionate cost. This is because it would require the re-calculation of the 2003–04 and 2004–05 ACA and the 2003–04 and 2004–05 settlements including the floor and ceiling calculations. This is a lengthy process.

Mr. Pound: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made in the balance of funding review of the impact on London local authorities of a local income tax. [164461]

Phil Hope: The Balance of Funding Review Steering Group heard evidence from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy on 4 March on the pros and cons of a local income tax. Their evidence included some assessment of the effect of different models of local income tax on different parts of the country.

Local Government Grants

Matthew Green: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on how many occasions he has rejected a local authority's application to introduce a houses in multiple occupation control registration scheme which did not comply with the model scheme requirements. [162717]

Keith Hill: Following the 1999 consultation paper on the Government's proposal for licensing of houses in multiple occupation the Department agreed a number of variations that could be made to the model scheme to reflect its proposals for licensing of HMOs. No applications have been received which do not conform to the variations and accordingly no schemes have been refused.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the safety net on losses on benefit subsidy is for Harrogate borough council in financial year 2004–05. [163039]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

The information is not available.

Under the new system it is not possible to predict exactly how much local authorities will receive in housing benefit/council tax benefit subsidy. There are a number of variables that will determine the outcome and these will not be known until the end of 2004–05. However, if a local authority's final housing benefit/council tax benefit subsidy for 2004–05 shows it to be disadvantaged by more than 0.5 per cent. of the amount they would otherwise have received under the previous system, its loss in that year would be limited to 0.5 per cent.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Mr. Todd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 144W, on the Local Government Pension Scheme, whether revisions to the Local Government Pension Scheme will facilitate early retirement being used as a mechanism to facilitate reorganisation. [163958]

Phil Hope: The proposed revisions to the Local Government Pension Scheme do not remove the capacity of local authority employers to make their own business decisions about early retirements when reorganisations occur. In doing so, they will need to take into account any resultant pension costs as exemplified by the appropriate pension fund authority, while at the same time ensuring their actions do not discriminate against older workers.

Kevin Brennan: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will issue guidance and advice to local authorities on changes in the rules on part-time employees in the Local Government Pension Scheme. [164279]

Phil Hope: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Tewkesbury on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1224W. The Local Government Pensions Committee of the Employers' Organisation for Local Government have now issued the further guidance referred to in that answer. Their Circular 152, dated March 2004, is available on their website at: http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/documents/pensions/152march04.doc

Mobile Phone Masts

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what penalties there are for mobile phone companies that fail to consult on the *(a)* erection and *(b)* upgrading of mobile phone masts; [163357]

(2) what requirements there are for mobile phone companies to consult residents when mobile phone masts near their homes are upgraded. [163359]

Keith Hill: The statutory requirements on a local planning authority to consult once a planning application or application for prior approval has been submitted are set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 and Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 respectively.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (revised) on Telecommunications together with the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development set out guidance and best practice for consultation on mobile mast development.

Both documents encourage the operators to undertake consultation and the traffic light model set out in the code is used to help develop a consultation plan for each proposed site. The operators have committed themselves to doing this and to independent monitoring of their implementation of this commitment.

New Deal for Communities

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which consultants have been used by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each New Deal for Communities partnership on the New Deal for Communities in each financial year since 1999–2000; and at what cost. [160345]

Yvette Cooper: A list of consultants 35 New Deal for Communities (NDC) Partnerships have used from the period 1999–2000 to date has been made available in the Library of the House. Unfortunately due to the time restriction we were unable to obtain data for four NDC partnerships, I will write to the hon. Member once the information is collated and wall make a copy of the letter in the Library.

The spreadsheet also contains information on the consultants that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister NDC Programme team have used from the period of 2002–2003 to date. Due to changes in the departmental accounting computer system the information for years prior to 2002–2003 is not readily available.

Public Bodies (Expenditure)

Matthew Green: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* total budget, *(b)* departmental funding and *(c)* administration costs for (i) rent assessment panels, (ii) The Ordnance Survey, (iii) The Standards Board for England, (iv) The Housing Corporation, (v) Housing Action Trust, (vi) The Boundary Commission for England, (vii) The Boundary Commission for Wales, (viii) The Property Advisory Group, (ix) The Audit Commission, (x) English Partnerships, (xi) The Rent Service, (xii) The Advisory Panel on Standards for the Planning Inspectorate, (xiii) Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, (xiv) The Fire Service College, (xv) The Planning Inspectorate, (xvi) The Advisory Panel on Beacon Councils, (xvii) The Building Regulations Advisory Committee, (xviii) The Community Forum, (xix) The Residential Property Advisory Group and (xx) Valuation Tribunal for this financial year. [150099]

Yvette Cooper: For 2003–04, figures are tabled as follows:

£

	(a) Total budget	*(b) Departmental funding*	*(c) Administration costs*
(i) Rent Assessment Panels	9,720,000	9,720,000	[1]7,288,000
(ii) Ordnance Survey	111,100,000	Nil	Not defined within total budget
(iii) Standards Board for England	8,944,000	8,944,000	7,891,000
(iv) Housing Corporation	1,898,900,000	1,897,800,000	38,200,000
(v) Housing Action Trusts	101,398,345	76,268,000	12,021,217
(vi) Boundary Commission for England	2,086,000	2,086,000	1,208,000
(vii) Boundary Commission for Wales	314,000	314,000	192,000
(x) English Partnerships	136,108,000	[2]235,000,000	29,100,000
(xi) The Rent Services[3]	46,100,000	46,100,000	46,100,000
(xiii) Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre	8,060,000	Nil	Not defined within total budget
(xiv) Fire Service College	20,000,000	7,634,000	Not defined within total budget
(xv) Planning Inspectorate[4]	51,737,000	41,759,000	48,976,000
(xx) Valuation Tribunals	10,793,000	10,793,000	10,793,000

[1] Includes elements for travel and subsistence paid to tribunal members and cost of hire of hearing rooms.
[2] English Partnerships' total budget figure is the Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) which applies to accrued net expenditure for the year. Under resource accounting policy, site acquisitions do not score against DEL when purchased but at the time of disposal. Departmental funding by way of grant-in-aid provides EP with the funds to acquire land which is held on the balance sheet but will not score in DEL until the time of disposal.
[3] All figures for TRS include £5.510 million capital
[4] All figures for PINS include £4.119 million capital.

On (ix), the Audit Commission, the Controller of Audit will write to you separately. The remaining bodies are all classified as advisory NDPBs: (viii) the Property Advisory Group, (xii) the Advisory Panel on Standards for the Planning Inspectorate, (xvi) the Advisory Panel on Beacon Councils, (xvii) the Building Regulations Advisory Committee, (xviii) the Community Forum, and (xix) the Residential Property Advisory Group do not receive Government funding other than the internal costs to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of sponsoring these bodies.

Regional Assemblies

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether staff from county and district councils in the regions of the north west, north east and Yorkshire and the Humber would be entitled to redundancy if regional assemblies were established and they were offered *(a)* no new employment, *(b)* a job in the new unitary authorities and *(c)* a job in the regional assembly; [163706]

(2) whether staff displaced from existing local authorities offered new placements would be given compensation for relocation following the formation of regional assemblies. [163707]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently considering with the Local Government Association, local government employers, trade unions and other key stakeholders potential arrangements for local government reorganisation. In the light of this work the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will decide what arrangements to adopt for any reorganisation following the referendum this autumn.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what revenue raising powers the proposed regional assemblies for *(a)* the North West, *(b)* the North East and *(c)* Yorkshire and the Humber would have. [163709]

Mr. Raynsford: The revenue raising powers of elected regional assemblies were set out in Chapter 5 of the White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions", published in May 2002 (Cm 5511).

In summary, the White Paper states that assemblies will receive a general grant to meet most of their direct running costs. But the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister believe that an assembly should be able to raise some extra money within the region if believes that this is desirable. Thus assemblies will be able to raise additional funds through a precept on the council tax. The money will be collected on behalf of the assembly by local authorities in the region as part of their existing arrangements for collecting council tax. As is the case for London, an assembly will not be able to vary non-domestic rates or affect business taxes.

The contribution of council tax-payers to the running costs of the assembly would be equivalent to around 5p per week (£2.60 a year) for a Band D council tax-payer in any region.

An elected assembly would be allowed to set a higher charge to fund additional spending if it considered this desirable. Assemblies will be accountable to their tax-payers for the precept levels that they set, however, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will have a reserve power to limit this amount through arrangements comparable to the existing local authority capping regime.

Shell Haven Port

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will make it his policy to impose a condition of approval for the Shell Haven Port application of a heritage fund to enable the local fishing industry to restart at a future date if the development goes ahead; [162193]

(2) if he will make if his policy to impose a condition of approval for the Shell Haven Port application that no dredging will take place at low water during the March to June spawning season. [162196]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

The applications for a new container port at London Gateway (formerly Shell Haven) are subject to the statutory planning approvals process. The inspector's report of the Public Inquiry held into the London Gateway proposals is now before Ministers for consideration. I cannot therefore make any further comment.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Coroners' Inquiries

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 10 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1571–72W, on coroners' inquiries, what the average length of time in bringing cases before the coroners' courts in *(a)* North Yorkshire, *(b)* East Yorkshire, *(c)* West Yorkshire and *(d)* South Yorkshire was in (i) 1997 and (ii) 2003. [161972]

Paul Goggins: In 2002, the latest year for which figures are available, the average time taken to process an inquest in the four areas mentioned, from the time the death was reported to the coroner until the time the inquest was concluded, is calculated to be just under four and a half months. On the same basis, the average time taken in those four areas for the coroner to issue a certificate permitting a body to be released for burial or other disposal, in cases where an inquest was subsequently held, amounted to six days.

In 1997, in the same areas, the average time taken to process an inquest was just over three months, and to issue a certificate, five and a quarter days.

Drugs

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost to date is of *(a)* setting up, *(b)* publicising and *(c)* running the Talk to FRANK service. [160066]

Caroline Flint: The FRANK marketing and advertising budget is £3 million per annum over three years (April 2002-March 2005) and is jointly funded by Home Office and Department of Health. The budget covers costs for: media, production of advertising and support literature, research and evaluation of the campaign, website development, PR and partnership marketing. For 2003–04 an additional £1.14 million was added to the publicity budget. The service also attracts running costs covered under a wider Department of Health contract for four helplines. An estimate of the proportion of total contract costs (£1.8 million) attributable to FRANK is not currently available.

Escort Contractors

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 15 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 130W, on escort contractors, what the equivalent figure was for each of the last 10 years. [163327]

Paul Goggins: The eight court escort contracts and the national contract for the movement of prisoners between prisons were introduced on a phased basis between April 1993 and April 1999; therefore complete national records are available only from April 1999.

These records show that Prison Service and contractors' vehicles covered the following approximate distances:

	[1] *Distance*
1999	17,300,000
2000	22,400,000
2001	22,800,000
2002	23,100,000
2003	22700,000

[1] Approximate

In addition, around 3,750,000 miles were covered between January and February 2004.

Firearms

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements he put in place to allow the pistol shooting events at the last Commonwealth Games to take place within the law. [163012]

Caroline Flint: The National Rifle Association, who hosted the shooting events at Bisley, provided details of every team taking part in the pistol shooting events and of every official who would have access to pistols. Specific authorities were then issued by the Home Office under section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968. The authorities were dated so as to come into force one week before the commencement of the Games and to expire 10 days after the close.

The pistols were brought into the country through Heathrow airport, where they were put into secure storage. They were then taken by section 5 authorised carrier to Bisley where they were placed in the secure armoury. The pistols were allowed out of the armoury only for the necessary practice and competition and returned to the armoury immediately after the shoot. No pistol was allowed to be taken off the site.

At the closing of the Games, all the pistols were taken out of the country in the same way they had arrived.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the safety record of shooting sports in England and Wales. [163110]

Caroline Flint: No information is collated centrally in relation to accidents or injuries resulting specifically from the use of firearms in connection with shooting sports.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what discussions he had with the police regarding the combining of section 1 and section 2 firearms on the same certificate; [162998]

(2) what representations he has received calling for *(a)* .22 gallery rifles to be licensed and *(b)* the introduction of (i) individual testing in the use of firearms and (ii) hunting examinations before the issue of a firearms certificate in England and Wales; [163007]

(3) what studies his Department has conducted into the difference in the numbers of fatalities and injuries from firearms incidents in those countries that have *(a)* individual testing in the use of firearms and *(b)* hunting examinations and those that do not. [163008]

Caroline Flint: There have been no formal discussions or representations on these issues. There will be an opportunity for all interested parties to comment on these and all other firearms-related issues in responding to the consultation paper we will be issuing shortly on the review of firearms legislation. No specific studies have been undertaken by the Home Office of practices in other countries relating to competency testing and hunting examinations.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his estimate is of the *(a)* efficiency and *(b)* practicality of the current arrangements for licensing section 2 firearms. [162999]

Caroline Flint: We shall be seeking views on this as part of the review of firearms legislation. A consultation paper will be issued shortly.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what information he has collated on *(a)* the time taken by the police and *(b)* the cost incurred to process (i) a firearms certificate and (ii) a shotgun certificate; [163000]

(2) what *(a)* qualifications and *(b)* experience are required by the police of officers serving in firearms licensing departments; [163001]

(3) what training is offered *(a)* before and *(b)* during posting to firearms inquiry officers; [163002]

(4) what plans he has to ensure the efficiency of the next round of renewals of shotgun and firearms certificates in 2004; [163049]

(5) what information he has collated on the plans being made by each constabulary firearms licensing department for the next round of renewals of shotgun and firearms certificates in 2004. [163050]

Caroline Flint: Police forces are responsible under the Firearms Acts for issuing firearms and shotgun certificates. It is for individual chief officers to establish targets for dealing with applications and for ensuring that staff are properly selected and trained for the tasks they carry out.

The average times taken for each force to undertake these functions are not centrally recorded but we understand that most forces would aim to deal with most applications within four to eight weeks.

As with other respects of police administration, firearms licensing is subject to monitoring by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. Forces are required to carry out a five year rolling programme of best value reviews of all areas of business.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applicants denied section 1 and section 2 certificates have appealed to the courts against the decision of the chief officer of each constabulary in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and how many appeals were successful. [163003]

Caroline Flint: Firearms licensing statistics for England and Wales are published annually in Home Office statistical bulletins, copies of which are placed in the Library of the House. Details are given of applications which are refused but no information is available on the outcome of any subsequent appeals.

Court statistics provide some information on the volume of appeals but I understand from the Department for Constitutional Affairs that these data are only complete back to 1998 and can only be provided on a court rather than police force basis. Area figures are as follows:

Volume of appeals against revoked firearms licences

Area (by Crown court)	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Avon and Somerset	7	7	8	7	9	3
Bedfordshire	1	1	2	1	1	3
Cambridgeshire	4	2	7	1	3	1
Cheshire	11	16	7	1	2	0
Cleveland	4	5	5	3	0	1
Cumbria	2	0	2	0	2	0
Derbyshire	8	8	5	1	2	4
Devon and Cornwall	8	11	8	2	5	10
Dorset	5	2	0	2	0	0
Durham	2	5	5	2	1	0
Dyfed Powys	15	32	16	14	22	15
Essex	17	8	7	4	12	8
Gloucestershire	5	1	3	0	4	0
Greater London	12	11	9	5	9	6
Greater Manchester	4	0	1	2	2	3
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	16	8	12	13	7	14
Hertfordshire	3	5	1	2	0	0
Humberside	2	3	7	6	3	4
Kent	7	3	4	0	0	2
Lancashire	9	4	10	4	7	3
Leicestershire	7	2	2	1	2	2
Lincolnshire	3	1	3	4	0	3
Merseyside	1	2	3	3	0	1
Norfolk	9	16	8	7	2	0
North Wales	1	4	5	5	3	3
North Yorkshire	6	3	3	0	1	0
Northamptonshire	4	3	3	4	5	2
Northumbria	9	13	16	2	5	4
Nottinghamshire	1	3	4	3	2	1
South Wales and Gwent	21	12	10	2	9	2
South Yorkshire	3	5	1	2	3	5
Staffordshire	5	1	0	4	2	2
Suffolk	8	7	6	4	4	6
Surrey	4	2	7	3	2	7
Sussex	8	9	8	9	2	6
Thames Valley	7	3	7	5	3	5
Warwickshire	0	1	5	0	2	1
West Mercia	2	4	2	1	0	2
West Midlands	16	3	4	3	2	4
West Yorkshire	14	7	5	3	4	1
Wiltshire	1	2	3	6	2	0
England and Wales	272	235	224	141	146	134

These figures relate only to those cases where the appeal is clearly against refusal to grant a firearm or shot gun certificate. Other cases listed only as 'refusal of certificate' have not been counted since these might refer to taxi or entertainment licences.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many .22 gallery rifles he estimates are in circulation in England and Wales; [163004]

(2) how many .22 shooting galleries he estimates there are in England and Wales; [163005]

(3) any *(a)* fatalities and *(b)* injuries were caused by the use of .22 gallery rifles in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [163006]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not available centrally. We will be seeking views on this aspect of shooting as part of the review of firearms legislation.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Home Office approved target shooting clubs there are in the Lancashire constabulary area. [163009]

Caroline Flint: There are 20 target shooting clubs currently approved by the Secretary of State in the Lancashire constabulary area.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applicants have applied to join Home Office approved target shooting clubs in each year since 1998; and how many have been successful. [163010]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not kept centrally.

Mr. Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on liaison between the Firearms Consultative Committee and a parallel body established in Northern Ireland. [161765]

Caroline Flint: As my hon. Friend will be aware, the Firearms Consultative Committee has ceased to exist. The extent to which it sought to liaise with Northern Ireland, which has its own separate legislation, would have been a matter for the Committee to determine.

Forensic Science

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will meet a small contingent from the Privatisation of Forensic Science lobby of Parliament on 30 March. [163544]

Ms Blears: I would be pleased to meet the hon. Member and his colleagues, but it would be helpful if we could agree to meet once I have had opportunity to consider the outline business case currently being prepared by my officials.

Information Technology

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 5 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1175W, on information technology, how many of the cases cited in the table related to *(a)* breaches of data protection law and *(b)* pornography. [162436]

Paul Goggins: None of the cases cited involved breaches of data protection laws. Of the two cases in 2002 involving Prison Service staff, one resulted in a member of staff being dismissed for downloading material believed to be pornographic. The other cases cited involved inappropriate use of e-mail and/or browsing inappropriate internet sites.

Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the evaluation report of the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme undertaken by Oxford University will be published. [162605]

Paul Goggins: We expect the report to be ready for publication, following peer review, in the summer.

Juvenile Crime

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of recorded crime was committed by persons aged *(a)* 15 to 18 years and *(b)* 15 to 21 years in each of the last three years. [163647]

Paul Goggins: The requested information is not available centrally.

Prisons

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the effects of funding of the Lancashire Probation Service on the funding of the weekend custody suite at Kirkham Prison. [161613]

Paul Goggins: There are no financial implications for the Lancashire Probation Service as a consequence of the introduction of intermittent custody pilots at Kirkham Prison. The Lancashire Probation Service does second three staff to Kirkham Prison, but the cost of these is fully reimbursed by the Prison Service.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the firms which are being invited to bid to *(a)* build and *(b)* run prisons. [162629]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 22 March 2004]*: There are currently no plans for competitions to build or to run prisons. Should such a competition be launched, this would be announced in a notice in the Official Journal of the European Union setting out details of the relevant contract and inviting expressions of interest. Those firms known to be likely to have an interest in the competition would be notified of the announcement. It is for these firms and any other interested firms to decide whether to bid.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have been assaulted in *(a)* privately and *(b)* publicly run prisons in each of the last three years. [161604]

Paul Goggins: The assaults data the Prison Service collects is an overall total for all assaults within a prison, it does not breakdown into assaults on prisoners, staff or others. However our current Key Performance Indicator for Serious Assaults, which offers a better indication of prisoner violence, has been given. This data is collected in a manner which does not identify cases of multiple or repeat assault on individual prisoners.

	Number of serious assaults on prisoners	*Average prisoner population*	*Rate of serious assaults as a proportion of prisoner population (percentage)*
Contracted prisons (privately operated)			
2001	50	5,511	0.9
2002	54	6,615	0.8
2003	74	6,713	1.1
Public prisons			
2001	447	60,790	0.7
2002	521	64,163	0.8
2003	687	66,325	1.0

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have escaped from *(a)* privately and *(b)* publicly run prisons in each of the last three years. [161605]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is as follows.

Contracted prisons (privately operated)	*Number of serious escapes from prisons*
2001	3
2002	0
2003	1

Public prisons	*Number of escapes from prisons*
2001	5
2002	10
2003	12

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average ratio of prisoners to wardens was in *(a)* privately and *(b)* publicly run prisons in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by category (i) A, (ii) B and (iii) C. [161606]

Paul Goggins: Contracted prisons (privately operated).

Category	Average prisoner population-2003	Prison custody officers[1]	Ratio
A			
B	6060	1531	3.96
C	340	95	3.58

[1] Prison Custody Officers are the equivalent of the public prisons Prison Officer

Public prisons

Category	Average prisoner population	Unified officers	Ratio
A	6272	3967	1.58
B	3406	1184	2.88
C	19001	5092	3.73

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* sentenced prisoners and *(b)* remand prisoners were in employment prior to entering prison in each of the last 10 years. [163285]

Paul Goggins: The available information is from large-scale resettlement surveys of sentenced prisoners nearing release, conducted in November-December 2001 and March-April 2003. In both surveys 33 per cent. of prisoners had been in employment, training or education in the four weeks before entering custody. Comparable information for preceding years is not available.

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners serving *(a)* short-term and *(b)* long-term sentences had employment upon release in each of the last 10 years. [163286]

Paul Goggins: The available information is from large-scale resettlement surveys of sentenced prisoners nearing release, conducted in November-December 2001 and March-April 2003. In both surveys 30 per cent. of prisoners had employment, training or education arranged on release. Comparable information for preceding years is not available.

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* short-term and *(b)* long-term prisoners were released in England and Wales without overnight accommodation in each of the last 10 years. [163288]

Paul Goggins: The available information, from large-scale resettlement surveys of sentenced prisoners nearing release conducted in November–December 2001 and March–April 2003, is contained in the following table. Comparable information for preceding years is not available.

Percentage

	Resettlement survey	
	2001	2003
Under 12 months	34	32
12 months to less than four years	35	25
Four years or over	24	23
Total	33	29

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of prisoners in England and Wales used prison gymnasium and sports facilities in each of the last 10 years. [163278]

Paul Goggins: The precise information that the right hon. Member seeks is not available. However, information is available on the amount of time that prisoners spend on physical education. This information is available for the last four years only and is set out in the table.

	Average weekly number of prisoners undertaking physical education	Percentage of prisoners undertaking physical education
2002–03	14,047	20.0
2001–02	13,235	19.9
2000–01	13,541	21.2
1999–2000	11,198	17.4

Probation

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what targets were set for the National Probation Service for the *(a)* current and *(b)* last financial year and to what extent they have been achieved. [161169]

Paul Goggins: The National Probation Service were set targets in eight key areas in 2002–03. The targets relating to Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) and the number starting basic skills courses were met while the targets on basic skills awards, victim contacts and clarity of court reports on minority ethnic offenders were narrowly missed. Targets on enforcement, accredited programmes and sickness absence were not met. The following table gives more details.

Targets were set in the same eight key areas in 2003–04 with substantial increases in the numerical targets from those set in 2002–03. There was a 50 per cent. increase in the DTTO, target, a 25 per cent. increase in the accredited programmes target, and 167 per cent. and 300 per cent. increases in the basic skills starts and awards targets respectively. The following table shows the extent to which these targets are currently being met by expressing the achievement between April and December (the latest available data) as a proportion of the expected level of achievement during the period. The expected level of achievement has been based on the trends achieved during 2002–03. The target on contacting victims has been exceeded whilst basic skills awards, accredited programmes and DTTOs are narrowly under the target expected at this stage in the year.

National Probation Service targets 2002–03 and 2003–04

	2002–03			2003–04			
Key performance measure	*Target*	*Actual*	*Percentage of target achieved*	*Target*	*Actual to date*	*Expected to date*	*Percentage of expected achieved*
Commencements of Drug Treatment and Testing Orders	6,000	6,140	102	9,000	6,159	6,490	95
Completions of Accredited Programmes	12,000	7,716	64	15,000	9,177	10,457	88
Percentage of orders enforced in accordance with national standards	90	64	—	90	76	—	—
Number starting basic skills courses	6,000	5,983	100	16,000	8,641	11,010	78
Number of basic skills awards	1,000	848	85	4,000	1,675	1,840	91
Percentage of victims contacted in accordance with national standards	85	81	—	85	91	—	—
Percentage of court reports on minority ethnic offenders with clear proposals	95	92		95	—	—	—
Sickness absence (average number of days per person per year)	10	11.9	—	9	12.1	—	—

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether targets for the National Probation Service during 2004–05 will be revised in the light of past performance. [161170]

Paul Goggins: Targets for the National Probation Service for 2004–05 have been issued to areas and are set out in the table.

The second column indicates whether the target is new, has been increased compared to 2003–04, or is unchanged.

Past and current performance has been taken into account in setting these targets, which are intended to be stretching yet achievable. For example, the new compliance target has been set at 70 per cent. based on current performance of 62 per cent.

Measure/Target 2004–05	*Change from 2003–04*
Enforcement and Compliance	
Initiate breach proceedings according to National Standards within 10 days in 90 per cent. of cases	No change
Increase to 70 per cent. the proportion of orders and licences in which the offender complies	New target
Offending Behaviour Programmes	
To achieve 15,000 completions	No change
Enhanced Community Punishment	
To achieve 30,000 completions	New target
Drug Treatment and Testing Orders	
To achieve 13,000 order commencements, including 1,000 lower intensity orders	Increased
To improve completion rates to 35 per cent.	New target
To increase the number of first contacts made within one day of the order being made to 90 per cent.	New target
To increase the number of first contacts made with the treatment provider within two days of the order being made to 90 per cent.	New target
Basic Skills	
To achieve 32,000 starts and 8,000 awards	Increased
Intensive Control and Change Programme	
To achieve 1,788 orders made and 1,101 completions	New target
Reports to Courts	
Clear proposals to be made in 95 per cent. of court report on ethnic minority offenders	No change
Victim Contact	
85 per cent. of victims to be contacted within eight weeks of an offender receiving 12 months imprisonment or more for serious sexual or violent offence	No change

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what factors led to the decision to close the Diversity Unit within the National Probation Directorate. [161171]

Paul Goggins: Probation areas' budgets for 2004–05 include £5.61 million, (1 per cent. of the total budget) that is dedicated to diversity projects. This is a three-fold increase on the previous year. Building on the progress made in recent years, the National Probation Service (NPS) intends to fully integrate diversity as a key part of its work. In order to achieve this, the National Probation Directorate's drive on diversity will include three elements:

the Regions and Performance Management Unit, where a new post filled by the previous Head of the Diversity Unit will provide support to local areas

the Human Resources Unit, which will lead on diversity policy development in relation to NPS staff

the Interventions Unit, which will provide similar leadership in relation to the offenders the Service works with.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many places are available in probation hostels in England and Wales; and how many of these places are occupied by *(a)* convicted sex offenders and *(b)* others covered by Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel arrangements. [161174]

Paul Goggins: There are currently 100 approved probation and bail hostels (approved premises) in England and Wales, providing around 2,240 places. No published data is available on the numbers of offenders convicted or charged with sexual offences who are resident in approved premises nor is there any published data on the number of Multi-Agency Public Probation Panel registered offenders in approved premises.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations have been received by the National Probation Directorate from the probation areas following the decision to award the contract for hostel facilities to Anglia Water. [160811]

Paul Goggins: The National Probation Directorate (NPD) regularly receives representations on the operation of the facilities management contract for approved hostels that was awarded to Anglian Water Group in October 2002. These representations are made through a series of Divisional Forums, meeting quarterly, whose membership includes the relevant local probation areas. NPD has also received a number of representations on facilities management issues from individuals and from probation areas.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many probation areas in England and Wales have reported that they will experience difficulties in producing a balanced budget for 2004–05. [160465]

Paul Goggins: The National Probation Directorate has received letters from either the Chief Officer and/or the Chair of nine probation areas concerning the difficulties in producing a balanced budget for 2004–05. Most of these areas are also those that are forecasting an over-spend for 2003–04.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many probation areas in England and Wales are expecting a shortfall in budget for 2004–05. [160466]

Paul Goggins: The National Probation Directorate has now received budget details for 2004–05 from most of the 42 probation areas. Some information is still awaited from some areas. These budgets are currently being analysed. Probation boards are required to produce a balanced budget in accordance with the rules of the Financial Memorandum agreed between the Home Office and the Probation Boards. The National Probation Directorate will carefully scrutinise probation board budgets to ensure that the assumptions that underpin those budgets are sustainable. Boards will not be allowed to have budget deficits or shortfalls.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the expected shortfall in the London probation area budget for 2004–05 is. [160467]

Paul Goggins: The London Probation Area budget for 2004/05 is currently being compiled by officials at the London Probation Area in consultation with the National Probation Directorate. Probation boards are required to produce a balanced budget in accordance with the rules of the financial memorandum agreed between the Home Office and the probation boards.

Rape

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many allegations of rape were reported to the police by women in *(a)* 1981, *(b)* 1991, *(c)* 2001 and *(d)* the last year for which statistics are available; how many of these reports resulted in prosecutions in each year; and how many prosecutions were successful; [160518]

(2) how many allegations of rape were reported to the police by men in *(a)* 1981, *(b)* 1991, *(c)* 2001 and *(d)* the last year for which statistics are available; how many of these reports resulted in prosecutions in each year; and how many prosecutions were successful. [160519]

Paul Goggins: Information on crimes reported to the police are not collected centrally. However, available data on the number of offences of rape recorded by the police are given in the table.

Offences of rape recorded by the police in England and Wales

Year[1]	*Rape of a female*	*Rape of a male*[2]	*Total rape offences*
1981	1,068	—	1,068
1991	4,045	—	4,045
2000–01	7,929	664	8,593
2001–02[3]	8,990	730	9,720
2002–03[3]	11,441	852	12,293

[1] Numbers of offences were recorded on a calendar year basis until 1997, and on a financial year basis thereafter. There was a change of counting rules for recorded crime on 1 April 1998, which had the effect of increasing the number of crime counted. Numbers of offences for years before and after this date are therefore not directly comparable.

[2] The offence of Rape of a male was added to the Recorded crime series from 1995.

[3] The National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) was introduced across England and Wales in April 2002. Some police forces adopted the Standard prior to this date. Broadly, the NCRS had the effect of increasing the number of crime recorded by the police and had an overall impact of increasing crime in 2002–03 by 10 per cent., although this figure will differ for different crime types. Therefore, following the introduction of the Standard, numbers of recorded crimes are not directly comparable with previous years.

The available prosecution statistics are given in the table. Court proceedings data relates to offenders and it is therefore not directly comparable with the recorded crime statistics.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts and found guilty all courts for rape offences England and Wales 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2002[1]

Offence type	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*
1981 Rape of a female	587	320
1991 Rape of a female	1711	540
2001 Rape of a female	2,472	522
Rape of a male	179	50
2002 Rape of a female	2,780	611
Rape of a male	165	44

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis

Sentencing Statistics

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many people were sentenced for *(a)* burglary, *(b)* assault, *(c)* actual bodily harm, *(d)* grievous bodily harm and *(e)* drug related offences in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years; what proportion received a custodial sentence; and what the average custodial sentence length was; [163237]

(2) how many people were sentenced in England and Wales for *(a)* theft and *(b)* handling stolen goods in each of the last 10 years; what proportion received a custodial sentence; and what the average custodial sentence length was; [163238]

(3) how many people were sentenced in England and Wales for *(a)* fraud and *(b)* forgery in each of the last 10 years; what proportion received a custodial sentence; and what the average custodial sentence length was; [163239]

(4) what the average custody rate for all recorded offences was in each of the last 10 years. [163279]

Paul Goggins: The available information is contained in the table and gives the number of offenders sentenced, sentenced to immediate custody, the custody rate and the average custodial sentence length at all courts for the requested offences, England and Wales 1993 to 2002.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the Autumn.

Number of offenders sentenced, sentenced to immediate custody, the custody rate and average custodial sentence length for various offences at all courts—England and Wales 1993 to 2002

Total sentenced

Offence	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Burglary	40,249	37,954	35,450	32,388	31,656	31,087	29,329	26,694	24,655	26,376
Assault [1]	19,024	21,860	29,298	29,983	31,992	35,278	37,457	37,415	37,612	40,599
Actual bodily harm	26,221	25,002	17,313	16,762	17,687	18,449	17,514	16,710	15,054	14,966
Grievous bodily harm	7,149	6,874	5,882	6,028	6,112	6,437	6,062	5,856	5,815	6,158
Drug offences	21,915	27,779	31,587	34,044	40,438	48,783	48,946	44,955	45,680	49,015
Theft and handling stolen goods	121,48	121,42	116,07	114,37	118,21	125,24	130,64	127,58	126,41	126,71
Fraud and forgery	17,499	18,390	17,232	16,319	16,930	19,645	20,203	19,155	18,207	18,126
All notifiable offences	366,33	375,05	369,30	370,79	391,60	422,65	427,52	412,99	407,38	423,26
Sentenced to immediate custody [2]										
Burglary	11,899	13,036	13,497	13,503	14,338	14,547	14,345	13,677	12,476	13,350
Assault [1]	1,165	1,657	2,540	2,890	3,383	3,812	4,385	4,259	4,276	4,532
Actual bodily harm	3,232	3,626	3,462	3,656	4,091	4,290	4,342	4,404	4,152	3,850
Grievous bodily harm	2,966	3,251	3,215	3,633	3,567	3,784	3,566	3,569	3,669	3,782
Drug offences	3,603	4,035	5,275	6,694	7,749	8,458	8,731	8,141	8,499	8,284
Theft and handling stolen goods	10,081	13,006	15,637	16,639	19,396	21,818	24,427	25,983	26,205	27,945
Fraud and forgery	2,427	2,674	3,315	3,377	3,606	4,130	4,034	3,726	3,826	3,754
All notifiable offences	49,587	56,644	64,954	70,362	77,310	83,881	87,174	87,491	87,050	92,189

	1993	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Custody rate [3] *(Percentage)*										
Burglary	30	34	38	42	45	47	49	51	51	51
Assault [1]	6	8	9	10	11	11	12	11	11	11
Actual bodily harm	12	15	20	22	23	23	25	26	28	26
Grievous bodily harm	41	47	55	60	58	59	59	61	63	61
Drug offences	16	15	17	20	19	17	18	18	19	17
Theft and handling stolen goods	8	11	13	15	16	17	19	20	21	22
Fraud and forgery	14	15	19	21	21	21	20	19	21	21
All notifiable offences	14	15	18	19	20	20	20	21	21	22
Average custodial sentence length (months) [4]										
Burglary	11.1	11.4	12.0	13.8	15.8	15.5	15.7	15.9	16.6	17.5
Assault [1]	2.7	2.8	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.8
Actual bodily harm	6.4	6.8	7.4	7.8	7.8	7.5	7.8	8.0	8.5	9.2
Grievous bodily harm	22.0	23.3	24.7	27.0	26.3	25.1	26.4	25.8	27.2	27.7
Drug offences	28.1	27.7	28.1	28.1	28.9	27.0	28.7	30.1	32.5	34.5
Theft and handling stolen goods	6.8	6.5	6.3	6.0	5.9	5.1	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.1
Fraud and forgery	11.3	11.1	9.9	10.6	9.7	9.3	8.5	8.7	8.6	8.4
All notifiable offences	14.7	14.1	14.0	14.9	14.8	13.1	13.2	13.2	13.8	14.6

[1] Common assault and assault on a constable combined.

[2] Includes unsuspended imprisonment, secure training orders, s91–92 of the Powers of the Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 replaces the Children and Young Persons Act 1933), partly suspended sentences, detention in a young offender iinstitution and detention and training

[3] Proportion of offenders sentenced who were sentenced to immediate custody.

[4] Excludes life sentences.

Note:

These data are on the principal offence

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many first time offenders were sentenced for *(a)* burglary, *(b)* violent offences and *(c)* drug related offences in each of the last 10 years; what proportion received a custodial sentence; and what the average custodial sentence length was. [163291]

Paul Goggins: Estimates of the number of offenders sentenced for *(a)* burglary *(b)* violent offences and *(c)* drug offences and who had no recorded previous convictions for a standard list offence are summarised in the table. 27 per cent. of first time domestic burglars received a custodial sentence in 1996. By 2000, this had increased to 48 per cent. At the same time, the average sentence length had increased from 16 to 18 months. There is no other information for custodial sentences or sentence lengths for these offenders readily available.

	Number in offence category		
	Violent Offences	*Burglary*	*Drug Offences*
1991	20,730	16,840	8,804
1992	n/a	n/a	n/a
1993	15,544	8,781	8,451
1994	16,043	8,480	8,856
1995	10,205	7,039	8,885
1996	15,132	8,064	11,661
1997	n/a	n/a	n/a
1998	15,744	7,307	15,939
1999	n/a	n/a	n/a
2000	14,867	7,118	14,524

Truancy Parental Imprisonment

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals have been sentenced to prison for allowing their children to play truant in each of the last 12 months. [163334]

Paul Goggins: Information reported to the Home Office shows that just one person was sentenced to immediate custody in England and Wales for the offence of knowing that their child was not attending school and took no reasonable steps to secure their attendance during 2002, the latest year for which figures are available.

Statistics for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

Wormwood Scrubs

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what expenditure has been incurred by the Home Office to date on payment to solicitors representing claimants alleging prison officer abuse at Wormwood Scrubs between November 1992 to October 2001. [162634]

Paul Goggins: As of 18 March 2004, £579,243 has been paid to solicitors representing prisoners who allege to have been abused by prison officers at Wormwood Scrubs.

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inquiries have been conducted since November 1992 into allegations of prison officer abuse at Wormwood Scrubs; and how many inquiries are under way. [162663]

Paul Goggins: Records prior to 1999 are not sufficiently detailed to show how many inquiries into individual allegations of abuse were conducted. Since then, 30 internal inquiries have been conducted into individual allegations of prison officer abuse. The police conducted two major investigations between 1998 and July 2003, into more than 100 allegations of abuse. All of these inquiries have been concluded.

Young Offenders

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the most recent estimate is of the cost to public funds of a week of community service served by a young offender. [159512]

Paul Goggins: Currently there are eight community sentences available for young offenders. Of these, two may involve an element of community service—the Community Punishment Order and the Community Punishment and Rehabilitation Order.

The Community Punishment Order (formerly the Community Service Order) is available for offenders aged 16 and upwards. Average weekly costs are not available nationally as courts set a total number of hours for community service and the young offender has 12 months to complete them.

The Community Punishment and Rehabilitation Order also includes community service. It can last between 12 months and three years. Average weekly costs are not available.

The Youth Justice Board is conducting an activity analysis in order to refine the unit costs of juvenile disposals. This is due to be completed by the end of May 2004 and I will write to my right hon. Friend at that time with the definitive figures.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the re-offending rates for young offenders who have been detained in *(a)* young offender institutions and *(b)* secure units were in the last period for which figures are available. [162313]

Paul Goggins: Information on reconvictions of young male offenders sent to young offender institutions up to 1999 was published in Tables 9.6 and 9.7 of Prison Statistics, England and Wales 2002 (Cmnd 5996).

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the numeracy and literacy levels of juvenile offenders detained in local authority secure units *(a)* at the start and *(b)* at the end of their period of detainment. [162378]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales commissions and purchases accommodation for juvenile offenders, including some places in local authority children's homes.

A YJB audit in those establishments in 2001 found that when they entered custody over half averaged six years behind the normal literacy of their age group and over a third were 10 years behind on numeracy. The YJB is currently collecting information on the educational attainments of young people while in those establishments. This will be published in the board's next Annual Statistical Bulletin, due in the autumn.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison officers were employed at each young offenders' institution in each month from June 2003 to the most recent month for which figures are available; and what the planned number of officers was in each month. [163209]

Paul Goggins: Staffing requirements are collated centrally every three months. The following table shows the number of staff and planned prison officer posts at each establishment with a major role as a young offenders' institution on a quarterly basis from June 2003. Where an establishment holds more than one category of prisoner, it is not possible to differentiate the staffing requirements for each category.

	30 June 2003		*30 September 2003*		*31 December 2003*		*29 February 2004*	
Establishment	*Staff in post*[1]	*Planned posts*	*Staff in post*[1]	*Planned posts*	*Staff in post*[1]	*Planned posts*	*Staff in post*[1]	*Planned posts*
Aylesbury	169.5	175.5	163	158.5	156.5	171.5	160	174
Brinsford	229	235.5	224.5	237.5	228.5	238	230.5	240
Castington	208	218	207.5	217	200.5	215	205.5	215
Deerbolt	178	178	179	180	175.5	182	180.5	183
Feltham	413.5	447	425.5	442	436	493	447	495
Glen Parva	254.5	272	251.5	270	257	278	254	274
Hindley	246.5	293.5	253.5	268	254.5	271	255.5	271
Lancaster Farms	209.5	242	218.5	242	220.5	244	221.5	244
Northallerton	67	66	67	67	64	64	66	66
Onley	222.5	234	223.5	234	221.5	231	212.5	229
Portland	167	173.5	164.5	171.5	172	179.5	167.5	177.5
Reading	116	119.5	109	119.5	109	119.5	112	119.5
Rochester	141	151.5	134	149	129	151.5	124.5	143
Stoke Heath	229.5	233	237.5	233	231.5	233	238.5	233
Swinfen Hall	116	118	119	118	117	119	117.5	120
Total	2,967.5	3,157	2,978	3,107	2,973	3,190	2,993	3,184

[1] Figures relate to prison officers, senior officers and principal officers.

In addition to the overall number of staff in post, officers at young offenders' institutions are currently contracted to work additional hours equivalent to an extra 128.5 officers. Total staffing availability at the end of February 2004 was therefore equivalent to 3,121.5 officers against an operational staffing requirement of 3,184. The shortfall is equivalent to 62.5 officers, or 2.0 per cent. which is an acceptable operating margin. The figures do not include new staff in the recruitment process on 29 February 2004.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* certified normal accommodation, *(b)* operational capacity and *(c)* population in each Young Offenders' Institution was in each month from June 2003 to the most recent month for which figures are available. [163210]

Paul Goggins: The certified normal accommodation, operational capacity and population of each single function Young Offender Institution in each month from June 2003 is given in the table.

Where an establishment has multiple functions, such as an adult training prison and a Young Offenders' Institution on a single site, population statistics are also provided.

CNA, operational capacity and population of YOIs by establishment

	2003							*2004*
	June	*July*	*August*	*September*	*October*	*November*	*December*	*January*
Certified normal accommodation								
Aylesbury	351	351	351	351	351	345	345	345
Deerbolt	513	513	513	513	513	513	513	513
Hindley	539	539	539	539	539	539	539	539
Northallerton	45	45	153	153	153	153	153	153
Onley	580	580	580	580	580	580	580	580
Portland	429	429	429	429	429	429	429	460
Rochester	180	180	180	180	180	180	269	269
Stoke Heath	572	572	572	572	572	572	572	572
Swinfen Hall	311	311	311	311	311	311	311	311
Thorn Cross	316	316	316	316	316	316	316	316
Warren Hill	214	214	214	222	222	222	222	222
Werrington	146	146	146	146	146	146	146	146
Wetherby	360	360	360	300	300	300	300	300

CNA, operational capacity and population of YOIs by establishment

	June	*July*	*August*	*2003 September*	*October*	*November*	*December*	*2004 January*
Operational capacity								
Aylesbury	355	355	355	355	355	350	350	350
Deerbolt	518	518	518	518	518	518	518	518
Hindley	559	559	559	559	559	539	539	539
Northallerton	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254
Onley	580	580	580	580	580	580	580	580
Portland	456	456	456	456	456	456	456	487
Rochester	180	180	180	180	180	180	269	269
Stoke Heath	688	688	688	688	688	688	688	688
Swinfen Hall	320	320	320	320	320	320	320	320
Thorn Cross	316	316	316	316	316	316	316	316
Warren Hill	220	220	220	222	222	222	222	222
Werrington	148	148	148	148	148	148	148	148
Wetherby	360	360	360	300	300	300	300	300
Population								
Ashfield	226	214	209	199	187	177	168	188
Aylesbury	346	343	338	346	346	345	341	339
Brinsford	224	246	222	246	242	224	235	238
Brockhill	14	20	22	19	15	23	20	23
Bullwood Hall	129	118	122	130	119	122	108	112
Castington	135	135	146	143	146	149	134	108
Chelmsford	77	54	55	57	34	43	49	24
Cookham	28	23	18	25	21	23	16	24
Deerbolt	426	459	458	433	449	482	445	454
Drake Hall	32	40	33	33	34	30	27	27
East Sutton	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3
Eastwood Park	28	22	22	33	25	26	28	25
Elmley	7	14	11	14	16	9	5	5
Feltham	336	273	234	250	267	269	276	221
Forest Bank	145	130	117	73	79	82	84	77
Glen Parva	574	574	507	519	561	539	529	569
Guys Marsh	131	140	132	134	131	138	128	138
Highdown	8	3	2	1	2	7	1	3
Hindley	494	472	451	494	453	457	476	435
Hollesley Bay	22	27	25	11	18	18	23	21
Holloway	9	24	15	15	14	14	21	16
Huntercombe	265	325	321	317	327	332	315	334
Lancaster	284	292	263	308	306	304	320	326
Low Newton	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Moorland	398	390	390	399	412	425	415	392
Moorland Open	113	109	102	102	89	91	63	53
New Hall	75	100	78	82	79	80	69	75
Northallerton	209	204	196	202	248	202	172	198
Norwich	119	116	123	107	123	124	128	123
Onley	496	497	473	468	472	462	378	357
Parc	209	252	247	219	217	197	177	159
Portland	433	446	441	446	453	444	440	439
Reading	16	12	17	19	18	20	12	15
Rochester	164	167	157	170	176	198	215	261
Stoke Heath	581	603	576	586	579	592	549	554
Styal	26	24	16	18	15	18	15	13
Swinfen Hall	312	319	316	314	314	317	310	307
Thorn Cross	182	182	201	201	215	232	185	223
Usk/Prescoed	10	12	6	8	9	6	4	3
Warren Hill	190	178	158	175	176	181	182	174
Werrington	113	125	128	120	125	112	120	133
Wetherby	269	261	272	221	221	214	215	214

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 30 March 2004

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animal By-Products Regulations

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she has established the penalties that will apply from the failure of the UK fully to *(a)* implement and *(b)* enforce the Animal By-Products Regulations. [158747]

Mr. Bradshaw: The UK has provided for the administration and enforcement of the EU Animal By-Products Regulation (EC) No. 1774/2002 by the Animal By-Products Regulations 2003. These came into force in England on 1 July 2003, in Scotland on 1 October 2003, in Wales on 31 October 2003 and on 3 December 2003 in Northern Ireland.

Had any part of the UK failed to observe our EU obligations, this could have led to enforcement action being taken by the European Commission in the European Court of Justice (ECJ). If a Member State fails to take the necessary measures to comply with the judgment of the European Court of Justice within the time limit specified, the Member State may incur either a lump sum penalty or a daily penalty payment. The penalty payment would be based on a uniform flat rate amount, multiplied by two coefficients, one reflecting the seriousness of the infringement, and the other the duration. This would then be multiplied by a factor reflecting the ability to pay and the number of votes the UK has in Council.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discretion she has under European Union law to delay full *(a)* implementation and *(b)* enforcement of the Animal By-Products Regulations. [158748]

Mr. Bradshaw: As the EU Animal By-Products Regulation (EC 1774/2002) is directly applicable in all Member States, no discretion is available to delay either the implementation or the enforcement of the Regulation. However, where possible the UK secured transitional measures where it was clear that sectors of industry needed further time to comply with the requirements of the Regulation.

Badgers/Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has made to the European Commission concerning the payment to farmers of consequential losses arising from the imposition of TB restrictions on their farms. [157987]

Mr. Bradshaw: No such representations have been made.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether live cattle imported from mainland Europe are tested for TB infection prior to being imported into the UK. [158595]

Mr. Bradshaw: Where the Member State, or the part of the Member State where the herd is situated is recognised as being officially free of tuberculosis (as defined by EU Directive 64/432/EEC), a TB test is not required prior to import to Great Britain. This applies whether for breeding, production or slaughter. All cattle must be tested if they do not come from a officially TB-free area.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice was given in *(a)* 1999 and *(b)* subsequent years to the Veterinary Investigation Service by the Health and Safety Executive concerning the safety of their laboratories handling TB contaminated material; what action was taken as a result of that advice; and what the cost of that action was. [158671]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Veterinary Investigation Service merged with the Central Veterinary Laboratory and became the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) In 1996.

VLA in Truro was served with a Crown Prohibition Notice by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on 16 August 1999. The HSE considered that it was unsafe to work with TB-infected badger carcases without the provision of "local exhaust ventilation".

VLA commissioned contractors to construct ventilated down-draught autopsy tables. The prototypes were installed at the Truro Regional Laboratory and were approved for use by the HSE. Subsequently, further autopsy tables were installed at all the remaining Regional Laboratories. The total cost was around £90,000. An additional sum of about £20,000 was spent on refurbishment of the Truro badger autopsy room.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures have been taken to assist farmers suffering multiple breakdowns safely to dispose of milk produced from reactor cows. [158699]

Mr. Bradshaw: No particular measures are required as, currently, milk from reactor cattle can be sold for human consumption, provided it has been heat-treated.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to what extent reactive culling undertaken in the Krebs trials is comparable with reactive culling trials undertaken previously. [158749]

Mr. Bradshaw: The randomised badger culling trial is the first culling trial in Great Britain to include scientific controls, allowing a rigorous estimation of the impact of a reactive culling protocol. No other such reactive culling trials have previously been undertaken in Great Britain.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how the Government reconciles its commitment to protect the badger populations with its commitment to maintain biodiversity in indigenous birds and mammals. [158752]

Mr. Bradshaw: As has been previously explained the badger benefits from legal protection introduced to outlaw cruelty towards animals. For example, the Protection of Animals Act 1911, which among other things, made the baiting of animals illegal, and the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, which made certain specified acts of cruelty illegal.

There is no reconciliation to be made with our stated commitment to biodiversity. The Department has put in place 391 species action plans, which are designed to help those species whose populations that are endangered or vulnerable.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether all TB hotspots in the UK have been identified. [158754]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no universally accepted definition of a "hotspot". Testing cattle herds for TB at regular enough intervals will, combined with other methods of surveillance, allow identification of areas of emerging infection in cattle.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the consequences for the spread of bovine TB are of badger migration into areas which are already colonised by established badger social groups. [158755]

Mr. Bradshaw: There will be some movement of badgers even within areas of high density where social groups are virtually contiguous. However, rates of movement between groups are likely to be lower at high population density. Wherever movement between groups occurs there is the potential for disease transmission.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether the Krebs trials should be halted immediately. [158760]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT) is under constant assessment. The Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISG) carry out periodic interim analyses of RBCT data. If the ISG's analyses were to reveal any significant findings they would be reported to Ministers. An Independent Review Group, chaired by Professor Charles Godfray, has just completed an assessment of the RBCT and associated work, and the state of progress. The Review Group's report is expected to be published soon.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the PathMan project to which her recent consultation document Preparing for a New GB Strategy on Bovine TB refers is; and when results are expected from it. [158761]

Mr. Bradshaw: The 'PathMan' project is not referred to in the consultation document "Preparing for a new GB strategy on bovine TB".

'PathMan' is a web-based data capture and project management system specifically developed for a complex project involving collection of data from multiple collaborators or sites. It is being used to collect project data (epidemiology, pathology, bacteriology, histopathology and immunology) from the examination of 200 tuberculin skin-test positive and 200 suspected false negative cattle in order to understand the pathogenesis of naturally infected animals. The project is due to end in September 2005.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of the reasons why the Krebs reactive trials led to an increase in bovine TB; [158793]

(2) whether the Krebs reactive trial proved conclusively that badgers are involved in the spread of TB among cattle. [158799]

Mr. Bradshaw: The report of the review group chaired by Sir John Krebs, published in 1998, concluded that "there is strong evidence for an association between TB in badgers and cattle". The result from the reactive element of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial adds to the sum of that evidence. Further research and analysis is under way to investigate the reasons for this finding.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what factors in the Thornbury trial contributed to the success of the trial in reducing bovine TB. [158794]

Mr. Bradshaw: Both the gassing method of culling to thoroughly eliminate the badgers, and the steps taken to prevent recolonization for several years, were factors likely to have maximised the reduction of any effect of badgers on cattle TB in the Thornbury trial area.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which voluntary groups have made representations to her Department on the welfare of badgers. [158795]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra periodically receives representations from a range of organisations on issues relating to badgers. Unfortunately, information is not kept in a form that would allow us, without disproportionate effort, to identify which representations specifically concerned badger welfare.

However, I can reveal that the following organisations contributed to the recent public consultation exercise on licensing under the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992. The welfare of badgers was a central issue of this exercise.

Cheshire Wildlife Trust
Dorset Badger Group
East Surrey Badger Protection Society
Herefordshire Badger Group
National Federation of Badger Groups
North East Essex Badger Group
North Northants Badger Group
The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
The Wildlife Trusts
West Sussex Badger Protection Group
Wirral and Cheshire Badger Group

In addition, I have recently received a representation from Naturewatch concerning legal provisions to combat badger cruelty.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* establishments and *(b)* research staff there are to provide the experimental resources needed to develop TB vaccines in badgers. [158796]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra funds research projects to develop diagnostic tests and vaccines for TB in badgers. These are collaborative projects between the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) at Weybridge and researchers in the Republic of Ireland.

Four staff are engaged at VLA on these projects.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to create partnerships with farmers by means of granting them licences to kill badgers in TB-infected areas as a means of improving control strategies for TB in cattle. [158797]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have no current plans for such partnerships. As the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs made clear at the recent National Farmers Union AGM, we are open to radical solutions. If scientific evidence suggests that badger culling would be effective we will want to consider whether we can develop a practical and cost-effective policy.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the likelihood of eradicating bovine TB by concentrating on biosecurity measures in the cattle industry without taking measures to eliminate the disease in the wildlife reservoir. [158798]

Mr. Bradshaw: None. The control of TB in cattle is a complex problem and there is no single solution.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she has identified economic benefits to the UK of allowing TB to be present in the national cattle herd. [158800]

Mr. Bradshaw: No.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the relevance to the UK of the results obtained in the Republic of Ireland following use of BCG vaccine on badgers. [159119]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government are aware that there has been recent research in the Republic of Ireland on vaccination of badgers with BCG. However, as this work has not yet been published, we are unable to comment on its significance.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the highest density of badgers recorded at any one location in England has been; and where that location was. [159238]

Mr. Bradshaw: A density of 38 badgers per km^2 has been reported at Wytham Woods near Oxford[1]. As far as we are aware this is the highest density of badgers recorded at a location in England.

[1] Macdonald, D. and Newman, C. (2002) Population dynamics of badger Meles males in Oxfordshire, United Kingdom: numbers, density and cohort life histories and a possible role of climate change in population growth. Journal of Zoology, 256, 121–138.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with her counterparts in the Republic of Ireland about public attitudes to control of TB in wildlife. [159241]

Mr. Bradshaw: No such discussions have taken place.

Coastal Defence

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are being taken to improve coastal defences in East Anglia. [163615]

Mr. Morley: I understand that over the next 10 years the Environment Agency (EA) is planning to spend about £70 million on coastal defence projects on the East Anglian coast to provide increased protection to some 25,000 residential properties.

The EA is carrying out significant works at Hunstanton to Heacham; Happisburgh to Winterton; Great Yarmouth; Felixstowe; and Tilbury. Defra is also grant aiding Waveney district council for major works to protect against coastal erosion on Corton seafront, north of Lowestoft, and will consider applications from coast protection authorities for other works that meet the Department's criteria for funding.

Five Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) cover the East Anglian coast. These are all to be reviewed and second generation SMPs produced by 2008. SMPs are high-level plans that recommend policies for flood defence and coastal protection for the future. They take account of erosion and pressures on existing defences and the need to work more in keeping with natural processes. They outline the management policy for each area of the coastline for the next 100 years, and will provide predictions of the implications of these policies over the next 20, 50 and 100 years. The first of these, SMP3b covering the coast from Kelling to Lowestoft Ness, is currently being developed by North Norfolk district council as the lead authority, along with the EA and Great Yarmouth borough council. The draft policies for this SMP will be available for consultation later this year.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was *(a)* allocated to and *(b)* spent on coastal defence in each of the last five years. [163616]

Mr. Morley: The flood and coastal defence operating authorities promote schemes within the constraints of Defra funding criteria so funds are not specifically set aside for coastal defences as such.

The original Defra grant allocations to the operating authorities (Environment Agency (EA), local authorities (LAs) and internal drainage boards (IDBs)) for capital improvement of defences against flooding, both coastal and otherwise, and coastal erosion for each of the last five years, and the outturn are as follows:

£ million

	Allocation	*Outturn*
1998–99		
Environment Agency	31.0	33.5
Local Authorities	21.9	25.0
Internal Drainage Boards	0.25	0.4
1999–2000		
Environment Agency	28.8	31.8
Local Authorities	26.9	26.0
Internal Drainage Boards	0.25	0.6

£ million

	Allocation	Outturn
2000–01		
Environment Agency	27.0	26.4
Local Authorities	27.0	13.9
Internal Drainage Boards	0.5	0.2
2001–02		
Environment Agency	44.0	38.5
Local Authorities	31.0	10.9
Internal Drainage Boards	2.1	1.3
2002–03		
Environment Agency	61.0	66.2
Local Authorities	23.0	30.7
Internal Drainage Boards	3.0	1.7

In addition to capital grants, Defra has provided LAs with borrowing cover for the net of grant costs of capital works and EA with contributions to national initiatives and costs incurred in relation to the autumn 2000 floods.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will provide an updated version of the point-scoring system used to decide upon priorities for coastal protection. [163753]

Mr. Morley: The Department's priority scoring system for the funding of flood defence and coast protection capital works was introduced in 1997 and revised in the light of experience following extensive consultation. The new system became operational from April 2003. There is no intended bias against coastal erosion schemes in the new system. If any unintended bias emerged the Department would be willing to consider changes to the system. Officials have agreed to hold a workshop with representatives of coast protection authorities to consider whether alternative approaches could inform the allocation process in future years.

Flood Protection

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Risk Assessment for Strategic Planning database held by the Environment Agency has been updated to take account of the performance of demountable flood defences in Bewdley; and when insurers will receive these data. [163111]

Mr. Morley: The Risk Assessment for Strategic Planning (RASP) method was used to produce the National Flood Risk Assessment 2002. The flood probability data arising from that exercise were provided under licence to the Association of British Insurers (ABI) in July 2003. That database has not been updated to take account of the successful use of demountable defences in Bewdley.

The Environment Agency is currently developing the RASP method for use for the National Flood Risk Assessment 2004. This will take into account the demountable defences at Bewdley. The EA's current plans are to make the flood probability data from this analysis of flood risk available to the ABI later this year.

Mr. David Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to re-examine policy on the flood protection for mobile homes in flood risk areas, with particular reference to assessment of possible benefits arising from raising the level of these homes; and if she will make a statement. [163219]

Mr. Morley: The Department has no current plans to re-examine the policy on flood protection for mobile homes in flood risk areas.

Defra provides funding to the relevant operating authorities for capital works where an area at risk of flooding is of sufficient national priority, and where it is possible to provide a technically sound, economically viable and environmentally sustainable scheme to reduce flood risk. For mobile home sites, one of the considerations in determining whether the cost of protection is reasonable will generally include whether it would be more cost effective for the site to be moved to a lower risk location. Clearly site owners may choose to implement measures to reduce flood risk at their own expense (subject to necessary consents) and, as landowners, they are ultimately responsible for protecting their property against flooding.

Advice to the owners of caravan parks and campsites can be found in "Planning Policy Guidance 25: Development and Flood Risk", published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. PPG25 emphasises that owners should prepare safe and effective plans for action to be taken in the event of a flood at the site and ensure that any person who resides in a caravan or tent on that site is informed of the degree of risk and the action they should take in a flood event.

Mr. David Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether residents of flood risk areas are required to contribute towards the cost of evacuation, including temporary accommodation; and if she will make a statement. [155867]

Mr. Morley: The costs of evacuation of people from their homes because of flooding or risk of flooding is a matter for local authorities. The provision of temporary accommodation for people who have been evacuated is a matter for individuals and their insurers, although local authorities can assist in cases where there is a need for their further assistance.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what help is being given to farmers on the Somerset levels to help with flooding under the mid-term Common Agricultural Policy reform. [161879]

Mr. Morley: The Somerset levels are a flood plain where flooding is part of the natural cycle.

While there is no general right to flood protection and no provision to compensate land owners or occupiers for flood damage, there are existing examples of cases where farmers have received payment for additional intentional flooding that forms a part of justified new flood defence measures. There is no intention to give farmers specific help with flooding under CAP reform.

Agri-environment schemes in the area have promoted raised water levels on some farms to enhance the habitat. Whilst this is not a specific flood management tool it can make a contribution and we intend to continue it under Environmental Stewardship from 2005.

GM Crops

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the cost-benefit analysis undertaken by her Department regarding the impact on the UK economy of adding each new GM crop. [164021]

Mr. Morley: As part of the GM Dialogue the Strategy Unit carried out a study of the costs and benefits of GM crops. Their report 'Field Work: weighing up the costs and benefits of GM crops' was published on 11 July last year. The report concluded that GM crops could offer some cost and convenience advantages to UK farmers, although any economic benefit is likely to be limited in the short term as only a narrow range of existing GM crops are currently suited to UK conditions, and weak consumer demand may limit take-up. In the longer term it concluded that future developments in GM crops have the potential to offer more wide-ranging benefits, to both farmers and consumers.

We will agree to the commercial cultivation of a GM crop only if we are satisfied that it is safe, and we will provide genuine choice for consumers. Ultimately, it will be for farmers and consumers to assess individual GM seeds and products and decide via the normal operation of the market whether they want to buy them.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she has taken to ensure that the Reading University cattle feeding studies involving Chardon LL fodder maize will be scientifically robust and independent of *(a)* Government and *(b)* GM crop technology companies. [163171]

Mr. Morley: The cattle feeding study carried out by Reading University was privately funded research. It is therefore not a matter for Government. I understand that the researchers intend to submit their study to a peer reviewed journal for publication so others will be able to assess the data when the peer review process is complete.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the Norwegian research on the safety of the CaMV promoter used in Chardon LL transgenic insert. [163205]

Mr. Morley: The reported new scientific evidence from Norway on the cauliflower mosaic virus promoter has yet to be published. When the details of this research do become available, the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE), which advises the Government on the risks posed by the intentional release of GMOs, will be asked to evaluate these data and advise on their implications for existing consents and future applications.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she gave consent for the harvested Chardon LL forage maize from FSE sites to be taken off-site and used in cattle feeding studies at the Reading University Centre for Dairy Research; and what conditions were attached to that consent. [163212]

Mr. Morley: The GM maize used in the farm scale evaluations has Europe-wide marketing consent for use in animal feed so no consent was required to use the harvested crop in the cattle feeding study carried out at the University of Reading.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much Chardon LL cattle feeding studies at Reading University has cost public funds. [163214]

Mr. Morley: There has been no cost to public funds. I understand the study carried out at Reading University was privately funded.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what results she has obtained from the Chardon LL cattle feeding studies completed at the Reading University Centre for Dairy Research in 2002. [163215]

Mr. Morley: I have not seen the results of this cattle feeding study, which was privately funded research undertaken by Reading University. Publication of the results of studies carried out by the university is a matter for them and those funding the work. However, I understand that the researchers intend to submit their study and the results to a peer-reviewed journal for publication.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what the process will be for the formulation of GM coexistence and liability measures; [164424]

(2) if it will be permissible for GM Chardon LL maize to be grown commercially in the United Kingdom before liability and compensation measures have been fully established; and whether she intends that such measures will be based on the principle of perpetual liability; [164425]

(3) whether statutory coexistence and liability measures will be put in place before GM Chardon LL maize can be grown commercially in the United Kingdom; and if she will make a statement. [164426]

(4) what measures she is taking to ensure that farmers wishing to grow GM crops commercially comply with a code of practice based on the EU 0.9 per cent. labelling threshold for GM content; and if she will give them statutory backing. [164427]

Mr Morley *[holding answer 29 March 2004]:* The GM maize Chardon LL will not be grown commercially in the UK before spring 2005 at the very earliest. The Government aim to have co-existence measures in place before then. We are proposing that GM growers should follow a code of practice which has statutory backing, based on the 0.9 per cent. EU labelling threshold for GM presence. It is envisaged that the code will include measures such as crop separation distances to minimise GM cross-pollination. We will consult stakeholders on the details of this as soon as possible, on whether a threshold below 0.9 per cent. should apply for organic production, and on options for providing compensation to non-GM farmers who incur a financial loss because a GM presence exceeds statutory thresholds.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the process is for modifying the Part C consent of Chardon LL maize under Directive 90/220/EEC before it can be grown and managed in the United Kingdom. [164428]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 29 March 2004]:* On 9 March officials wrote to the French Competent Authority, which issued the relevant consents on behalf of the EU Member States, seeking amendments to the consent for Bayer T25 GM maize (Chardon LL) to limit herbicide use with the crop in line with ACRE'S advice. In accordance with Directive 2001/18 the French Competent Authority are required to forward an assessment report to the Commission who will forward it to all the other Member States. A collective EU decision will then be made on the proposal for amending the conditions of the consent.

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish the results obtained from the Chardon LL cattle feeding studies which were completed at the Reading University Centre for Dairy Research in 2002. [162981]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 23 March 2004]:* I understand this cattle feeding study was privately funded research undertaken by Reading university. Publication of the results of studies carried out by the university is a matter for them and those funding the work. However, I understand that the researchers intend to submit their study and the results to a peer-reviewed journal for publication.

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether parliamentary approval will be required to allow the commercial growing of GM maize. [163509]

Mr. Morley: No. The procedures for assessing individual applications to grow GM crops are set out in EU Directive 2001/18 and in the implementing UK legislation. These were subject to parliamentary scrutiny at the time. The legislation provides for decisions to be taken on individual applications by Government. Final decisions on commercial approvals for GM crops are taken collectively by EU member states.

The Government's policy on the commercial growing of GM crops was set out in the statement to Parliament on 9 March.

Parrett Catchment Project

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what proposed timetable she has been given for the Parrett sluice; [161885]

(2) what recent submissions she has received concerning the Parrett Catchment Project. [161886]

Mr. Morley: We have not been given a timetable for the Parrett Sluice.

The Environment Agency are currently investigating and developing options for flood risk mitigation in Bridgewater. Until all options have been evaluated it will not be possible to propose a valid timetable for the Parrett Sluice.

As to submissions, we received a report on the Parrett Catchment Project in January 2003. Most recently, the Parrett Catchment Project submitted a response to each of the three phases of public consultation run as part of the agri-environment schemes review, a major review of agri-environment schemes in England. In their most recent submission, dated 8 December 2003, they welcomed the inclusion of flood management as a secondary objective of the new Higher Level Scheme that will replace the current Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Areas Schemes; and made a series of detailed comments on the options. We are still evaluating these.

Sea Birds

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to ratify the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels; and if she will make a statement. [163558]

Mr. Morley: The UK will ratify this Agreement on 2 April.

Secondments

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG have made to her Department since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from her Department have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [156916]

Alun Michael: Since 2001 no secondments have been made to Defra from the companies shown at *(a)* to *(d)* in the question, nor were there any secondments to those companies.

Sewerage

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will place in the Library a copy of the W.S. Atkins' research into the scale and problems of private sewers; [162889]

(2) if she will make a statement on the steps taken since the end of the consultation period on the scale and problem of private sewers and drains in England and Wales. [162890]

Mr. Morley: The research on private sewers carried out by W. S. Atkins, was contained in our consultation paper published in July 2003. A copy of that consultation paper, together with a summary of responses, has already been placed in the Library.

Since the consultation period ended, we have analysed responses and worked with stakeholders to identify the issues which will need to be resolved before a decision on the way forward can be made. We intend to publish our findings in early summer.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will estimate the total amount of solid waste which entered the sewage network in England and Wales in 2003, broken down by *(a)* household and *(b)* other sources. [162891]

Mr. Morley: Information on the total amount of solid waste entering the sewerage network in England and Wales is not collected for regulatory purposes. Ofwat obtains information on the total actual sewage from the ten water and sewerage companies in England and Wales. Aggregate figures for 2002–03 are as follows:

Sewage—Volumes	*Megalitres per day*
Uunmeasured household sewage	6,468
Unmeasured non-household sewage	167
Unmeasured sewage	[1]6,635
Measured domestic sewage	2849
Trade effluent	757
Waste water returned	[2]10,242

[1] This is the sum of unmeasured household and non-household sewage.
[2] This is the sum of unmeasured sewage, measured domestic sewage and trade effluent.

Volume	*Megalitres*
Septic tank waste	1,343
Cesspool waste	940

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many incidents of flooding have occurred in the last three years where raw sewage was involved in the contamination of people's homes and property; and if she will make a statement. [162892]

Mr. Morley: The Director General of the Office of Water Services has provided the following figures.

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Number of incidents			
Overloaded sewers (hydraulic)	3,946	2,468	2,809
Other causes	4,213	3,116	3,219
Total	8,159	5,584	6,028
Number of properties			
Overloaded sewers (hydraulic)	3,228	2,108	2,318
Other causes	3,875	2,849	3,009
Total	7,103	4,957	[1]5,327

[1] Of these nearly 1,100 resulted from heavy summer storms that affected the north of England and for 1,159 properties the flooding affected only uninhabited cellars.
Notes:
1. Hydraulic causes: primarily a lack of capacity in the sewerage network.
2. Other causes: include blockage, collapse etc.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the *(a)* cost and *(b)* environmental impact per volume of sewerage from (i) main sewers, (ii) unadopted sewers, (iii) private sewers, (iv) septic tanks and (v) other non-sewer network-based systems for sewerage disposal; and if she will make a statement. [162896]

Mr. Morley: Information on sewage disposal/ treatment costs has been acquired during the W.S. Atkins research into existing private sewers and drains in England and Wales. The information obtained was mainly in relation to operational data i.e. maintenance and repair costs. W.S. Atkins has suggested that private treatment facilities would on average cost more per property per year to properly maintain than if the property was connected directly to a public sewer. If private treatment facilities are not properly maintained then there is a potential for them to cause pollution of their surrounding environment. In such cases, applications can be made under Section 101Aof the Water Industry Act 1991 for connection to the public sewer network.

The Environment Agency (EA) regulates many activities that have an impact on the environment, including those that have the potential to cause pollution of water. In this respect, the EA has responsibility under the Water Resources Act 1991 (WRA) for the regulation of discharges to controlled waters through the consenting system. If there is no consent, or consents are breached by causing or knowingly permitting any poisonous, noxious or polluting matter to enter controlled waters, this is an offence and the polluter is liable to prosecution under the WRA 1991.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the current state of sewerage infrastructure, including the *(a)* physical extent of the maintenance and repair backlog and *(b)* expected cost of these repairs. [162897]

Mr. Morley: I am informed by the Director General of Water Services, that the current serviceability of the sewerage network is stable.

Sewerage companies are under a statutory duty under section 94 of the Water Industry Act 1991, enforceable by the Secretary of State or the Director General of Water Services, to ensure the effectual drainage of their area.

Sewerage Undertakers will shortly be submitting to the Director General of Water Services, final business plans for the period of 2005–10. These plans will include capital maintenance to maintain the serviceability of their assets, and to sustain levels of service to their customers. The draft business plans submitted by the companies in August 2003 propose costs of £1.2 billion to maintain sewerage infrastructure in the period 2005–10.

Sheep Tagging

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the *(a)* usefulness and *(b)* costs of sheep tagging; and if she will make a statement. [163571]

Alun Michael: Eartags are an important means of identification for sheep. They allow the holding on which an animal was born and where it has moved from to be identified. This is important when dealing with the tracing and control of animal disease.

The Department produced a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) to look at the costs involved with implementing EU proposals on sheep and goat identification which was lodged in the House Library. EU Regulation 21/2004 was adopted in December and the Department will be producing a further RIA on the new EU requirements before they are implemented in July 2005.

Single Payments

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on gold plating of the standard form for single tax payments. [156506]

Alun Michael: Our policy is to keep administrative burdens to a minimum and to avoid gold plating. Defra and the RPA are working closely on the development of the new Single Farm Payments Scheme and will ensure that application forms contain only the information necessary to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements in line with Government policy on better regulation.

Special Areas of Conservation

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects *(a)* Bolton Fell Moss and *(b)* Solway Moss to be designated as candidate Special Areas of Conservation. [163642]

Mr. Bradshaw: Public consultation has been completed for both sites but there remain unresolved objections which require further consideration. Discussions are currently taking place with the objectors. The Secretary of State will decide whether to submit these sites to the European Commission, as candidate Special Areas of Conservation, when the discussions are concluded.

Swill Feeding

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many replies her Department received in response to the consultation document that preceded the ban on swill feeding; and what percentage of respondents favoured a ban. [162497]

Mr. Bradshaw: The final total number of responses, including the late responses, received was 357. Responses were not clear cut as the consultation asked a number of questions but, taking account of all the responses, there were 37 per cent. against the ban, 32 per cent. in favour and 31 per cent. expressing no preference. Those in favour included major organisations representing widespread interests. They included, among others, the British Pig Association, the National Farmers Union, the National Consumer Council, and the Meat and Livestock Commission.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Iraq

11. **Mr. David Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the extent is of British companies' involvement in the reconstruction of Iraq. [164131]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: British companies are playing an important role in the reconstruction process of Iraq. In the recent tranche of contracts worth a total of $5 billion, British companies in joint venture with US companies have won substantial contracts in the Electricity and Public Works and Water sectors, worth in excess of $1.5 billion.

My hon. Friend was in Basra and so knows British companies are also active in the banking, ports, construction, telecoms, security, legal services and consultancy sectors.

14. **Jim Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Governments of countries neighbouring Iraq about the cross-border movements of terrorist groups. [164134]

Mr. Rammell: We have regular contacts with Iraq's neighbours about cross-border movements of terrorist groups. The Coalition Provisional Authority is currently working on a phased plan to tighten border security, beginning with the Iranian border.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the distribution of the Iraqi Oil for Food money and accrued interest. [163532]

Mr. Rammell: UN Security Council Resolution 1483 established the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) as a single account to handle all proceeds from the sale of Iraqi oil, all remaining monies from the Oil For Food (OFF) programme, and all unencumbered Iraqi overseas assets. The DFI is used to fund the Iraqi Budget and additional emergency expenditures authorised by the joint Coalition-Iraqi Programme Review Board.

In addition to the $1 billion transferred from OFF accounts to the DFI at its inception, all uncommitted OFF monies were transferred to the DFI following the hand-over of responsibility for ongoing OFF contracts to the Iraqi Ministry of Trade and the Coalition Provisional Authority on 21 November 2003. The accounts of the DFI as of 5 March 2004 show that this transfer amounted to $2,192,314,373.89.

The DFI is an interest-bearing account held at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and all interest earned by the account is re-invested. The accounts of the DFI, the Iraqi Budget and minutes of the Program Review Board are available on-line at the CPA website: www.cpa-iraq.org.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will set out the basic constitutional rules and decision making systems for the Iraqi Transitional National Assembly; and if he will make a statement. [163990]

Mr. Rammell: The principles of the transitional political structures in Iraq, including the Transitional National Assembly are set out in the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), which was signed by the Iraqi Governing Council on 8 March. A copy of the TAL has been placed in the Library of the House. The signing of the TAL was a major step forward for the political process in Iraq.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will set out the membership of the Iraqi Transitional National Assembly, including the members' ethnicity; and if he will make a statement. [163995]

Mr. Rammell: The Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) was signed by the Iraqi Governing Council on 8 March. The TAL establishes the principles of the

transitional political structures and sets out the timetable for the elections processes, including membership of the National Assembly. Article 30 states:

C "The National Assembly shall be elected in accordance with an electoral law and a political parties law. The electoral law shall aim to achieve the goal of having women constitute no less than one quarter of the members of the National Assembly and of having fair representation for all communities in Iraq, including the Turcomans, Chaldo-Assyrians and others."

D "Elections for the National Assembly shall take place by 31 December 2004 if possible and in any case no later than 31 January 2005."

The Iraqis have invited the UN to re-engage in Iraq and assist with the elections processes. We welcome the return to Iraq of the Head of the UN Elections Assistance Division, Carina Perelli, to advise on the establishment of an Independent Elections Commission by May.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Iraqi Governing Council's proposals to replace the country's civil family laws with Islamic Sharia Law. [164026]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Joan Ruddock) on 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1435W.

Governing Council Resolution 137 on family law has been withdrawn by the Governing Council. It has no legal status.

Mr. Huw Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures are being taken by the international bodies involved in the reconstruction of Iraq to protect the interests of the Mandaean religious community. [164255]

Mr. Rammell: The Coalition is working hard with the Iraqis to strengthen the Iraqi security and judiciary sectors to provide law and order and to protect the rights of all Iraqis. The fundamental rights of all Iraqis are laid out in Article 12 of the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), which was agreed by the Iraqi Governing Council on 8 March 2004. A copy of the TAL has been placed in the Library of the House.

Spain

12. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the new Spanish Government; and if he will make a statement. [164132]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs spoke with Prime Minister-elect Zapatero's principal Foreign Affairs Advisor, Miguel Angel Moratinos, on 15 March to congratulate him on the PSOE's election victory. Officials have also been in contact with members of the government-elect.

Counter-terrorism (EU)

13. **Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the measures taken in the EU on the struggle against terrorism. [164133]

Mr. MacShane: In the wake of the 11 September attacks, the EU adopted an action plan on counter-terrorism, which last week's European Council updated and extended.

Much of the old action plan had been achieved. A Framework Decision on Terrorism has tightened counter terrorist legislation in those countries which had not previously faced a terrorist threat. A European Arrest Warrant allows quicker extradition from one member state to another. A system has been established collectively to freeze terrorist assets. Last week's Council decided that we need rapidly to complete implementation of the measures already agreed, approved a wide ranging package of measures designed to enhance further our citizens' security, and endorsed the creation of an EU counter-terrorism co-ordinator.

EU Constitution

16. **Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on prospects for the proposed Constitution for the European Union. [164136]

Mr. MacShane: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd).

United Nations Reform

17. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's policy is on reform of the United Nations. [164137]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, North and Leith (Mr. Lazarowicz).

19. **Linda Gilroy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on United Nations reform. [164140]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, North and Leith (Mr. Lazarowicz).

Eritrea

18. **Tony Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the situation in Eritrea. [164138]

Mr. Mullin: The internal situation in Eritrea is stable. However, we do have concerns about the human rights situation in the country. We have made this clear to the Eritrean authorities.

Afghanistan

20. **Sir Sydney Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the latest security situation in Afghanistan. [164141]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The security situation in Afghanistan remains fragile, particularly in the South and East. Sporadic attacks continue against both international and Afghan forces, as well as the UN and

NGOs. Fighting between Afghan forces also occurs, as seen in a recent incident in Herat that resulted in the death of the Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister.

The international community, including the UK, is responding with increased commitments of troops and resources, including by extending the network of Provincial Reconstruction Teams. In the long-term, Afghanistan must be able to maintain its own security, through an effective national army and police force. Work to recruit and train those has been under way for some time, with the UK's active support and involvement.

Serbia/Montenegro

21. **Mr. Randall**: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current situation in Serbia and Montenegro. [164142]

Mr. MacShane: Following recent elections, the new Serbian Government are focussing on their domestic reform programme. We welcome their commitment to closer European integration through the state union with Montenegro.

We continue to put pressure on Belgrade to engage constructively over Kosovo and renew co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Israel

22. **Claire Ward:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli Government regarding continued incursions onto Palestinian land. [164143]

Mr. Rammell: Phase One of the roadmap provides for a progressive withdrawal of the Israeli security forces from areas occupied since 28 September 2000. We have urged the Israeli Government on many occasions to meet their obligations under the roadmap without delay. Israel is entitled to take steps to ensure its security, and safeguard itself against terrorism, but only within international law.

We regard the construction of the Israeli barrier on Palestinian land as unlawful and have made this clear both to the Israeli Government and at the UN. Most recently, following the assassination of Sheikh Yassin on 22 March, my noble Friend, the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean made it clear to the Israeli Ambassador, Zvi Shtauber, that the excessive use of force in the Occupied Territories does nothing to improve prospects for peace.

Arms Control

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans the Government have to take forward work on arms control as part of the UK's *(a)* chairmanship of the G8 and *(b)* presidency of the European Council in 2005. [163356]

Mr. MacShane: The United Kingdom will assume the chairmanship of the G8 in January 2005, and the Presidency of the EU in July 2005. The Government have yet to finalise their priorities for the assumption of these key roles. We will, however, wish to continue work already under way on arms control issues and, in particular, to take forward work on implementing coherent strategies on arms control and counter-proliferation in both fora. As was made clear by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary in his statement of 25 February, counter-proliferation issues remain a high priority for the Government (*Official Report*, columns 46–49WS).

Arms Exports

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total value of British arms exports to *(a)* Israel and *(b)* the occupied territories was in each of the last five years. [163680]

Nigel Griffiths: I have been asked to reply.

Since May 1997, the Government have published an annual report on strategic export controls containing details of all goods, including components, authorised for export from the UK and to which destinations. The total value of SIEL licences issued for each destination is recorded in these reports. Copies of the annual report (up to and including 2002) are available from the Libraries of the House. Details of export licences approved in 2003 will be published later this year in the 2003 annual report.

Concerning quantities exported, HM Customs and Excise and DTI compliance officers check that the terms of the licence have been respected but do not store data on volumes of actual exports which have been vetted and licensed.

Departmental Buildings

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* renovation and *(b)* maintenance projects on buildings (i) owned and (ii) rented by his Department were undertaken in each of the last five years; and what the associated costs were of each. [163955]

Mr. Rammell: There have been no renovation projects carried out on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in the UK during the past five years. The cost of individual maintenance projects can be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, the total cost of maintenance of the FCO UK Estate during the last five years was:

£

	Owned	*Rented*
1999	7,366,086	161,904
2000	5,360,579	375,679
2001	8,882,212	746,222
2002	6,035,173	325,632
2003	6,579,242	608,547

The details given relate only to the FCO estate in the UK. Details of renovation and maintenance of the overseas estate are held at the individual posts concerned and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

EU Border Management Agency

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what Britain's preferred location for the headquarters of the new EU Border Management Agency is. [164251]

Mr. MacShane: The UK is still considering options for the location for the headquarters of the new EU Border Management Agency.

Human Rights and Democracy Projects

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what his Department's involvement was in the 2002 European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy projects on *(a)* the prevention of torture in Georgia and *(b)* the campaign against torture in Ukraine; and what assessment he has made of each project; [163863]

(2) what his Department's involvement was in the 2002 European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy project on *(a)* improving the functioning of the political institutions and reinforcing the mechanisms of protection of human rights and *(b)* the support of the Moscow School of Political Studies; and what assessment he has made of the projects. [163865]

Mr. Rammell: Decisions about the individual projects funded by the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights are made by the European Commission and by local EC delegations. They are also responsible for managing and evaluating the projects. The EU Committee on Human Rights and Democracy allocates EU budget resources to projects in third countries and is responsible for evaluating the impact of the fund. The UK is represented on the Committee by officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the UK Permanent Representation to the EU.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the 2002 European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights micro projects in *(a)* Georgia, *(b)* Russia and *(c)* Ukraine were; how his Department was involved in the micro projects; and what assessment he has made of them. [163866]

Mr. Rammell: The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights micro projects scheme is for projects between 10,000 and 100,000 euros (£6,689 and £66,890). These are selected through calls for proposals conducted locally by EC delegations who manage and evaluate the projects.

Priority themes and budget allocations are set by the EU Committee on Human Rights and Democracy on which the UK is represented by officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the UK Permanent Representation to the EU. Local British Embassies also keep in touch with the local Commission delegation.

Iran

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the latest assessment of Iran's capability to produce weapons of mass destruction. [163976]

Mr. MacShane: We continue to have concerns about Iran's work on uranium enrichment, which, under the agreement signed by Iran and the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and the United Kingdom on 21 October 2003, Iran undertook to suspend. We welcome Iran's recent decision to allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency to have access to Iranian nuclear facilities, and hope that Iran will co-operate fully with them.

We judge that Iran also has the capability and the facilities to produce both chemical and biological weapons. Iran is a State Party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Upon accession to the CWC, Iran declared that it had produced chemical weapons in the past and that it had destroyed them.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on human rights in Iran, with reference to the recent election. [163977]

Mr. Rammell: Over the last 10 years Iran has made progress towards greater political freedom. But the flawed parliamentary elections held on 20 February were a clear setback.

On 23 February, EU Foreign Ministers expressed their deep regret and disappointment that large numbers of candidates, including many sitting deputies, had been prevented from standing, thus making impossible a genuine democratic choice by the Iranian people. For elections in any country to be regarded as free and fair, electors must have a chance to vote for candidates with a range of views.

Kashmir

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had in Pakistan regarding talks to resolve the Kashmir issue and continue the work on improving Indo-Pakistan relations. [164129]

Mr. Straw: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Luff) earlier today.

We warmly welcome the recent talks between India and Pakistan where they agreed an agenda and timetable for substantive talks, including on the issue of Kashmir. During my recent visits to India and Pakistan, I congratulated President Musharraf, Deputy Prime Minister Advani and Foreign Ministers Kasuri and Sinha on this breakthrough and assured them of our full support as they take this process forward. We recognise that these talks, due to begin after the Indian general election, will be a step in a long and difficult process. We hope that they will, in due course, lead to a durable settlement of all the outstanding issues, including Kashmir.

Korean Peninsula

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has held with his Chinese counterpart on nuclear proliferation on the Korean Peninsula. [163894]

Mr. MacShane: We have a regular dialogue, at both ministerial and official level, with the Government of China on a range of issues of mutual concern. This includes discussion of proliferation on the Korean Peninsula.

Middle East

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received on the removal of funds by the Israeli Government from Palestinian and Jordanian banks in Ramallah in raids in February. [163915]

Mr. Rammell: The Government have received accounts of the Israeli action against banks in Ramallah in February from both the Israeli and Palestinian authorities. The Government understand the need to stop the financing of terrorist groups but are concerned that this action may undermine steps being taken on this issue by the Palestinian Authority.

Poppy Production (Afghanistan)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress his Department is making in meeting the target of cutting poppy production in Afghanistan. [164144]

Mr. Rammell: The UK is supporting the Afghan Government in their efforts to eliminate poppy production in Afghanistan.

We have committed £70 million over three years and have a dedicated counter narcotics team in Kabul. According to the United Nations annual poppy crop survey in Afghanistan, the level of opium cultivation in Afghanistan in 2003 increased to 80,000 hectares from 74,000 hectares in 2002. While unwelcome, this is not unexpected. Experience of counter-narcotic policies in other countries, such as Pakistan and Thailand where production started from a much lower level and where there was greater central state control, shows production tends to increase before it decreases.

Increasing security and governance remains key to progress.

CABINET OFFICE

BACS

Brian White: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what progress his Department has made to manage the changeover from the Bank Automated Clearing System to the new BACSTEL-IP system for electronic payments. [164320]

Mr. Alexander: The Cabinet Office is working with software suppliers and is drawing up a migration plan as recommended in the guidance issued by the Office of the Paymaster General (OPG) to change over the Bank Automated clearing system to the new BACSTEL-IP system by December 2005.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Digital Television

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Lichfield (Michael Fabricant) of 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1293W, on Digital Television when she plans to undertake a public consultation on the timetable for switching off analogue television services. [164680]

Estelle Morris: We are working with stakeholders including consumer groups, to have a better understanding of the process of switchover and the options available and we will make an announcement about consultation in due course.

Honours (Rugby)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to her answer of 17 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 316W, on Sports (Honours), what the reasons are for the differences between the number of honours awarded over the last five years for sporting involvement in rugby league and rugby union; and if she will make a statement. [163960]

Mr. Caborn: Decisions made by the honours committee are made on the basis of individual merit. I cannot comment on individual cases.

National Lottery

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps have been taken in response to the National Audit Office Report by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, to improve the distribution of Lottery money across the regions; and if she will make a statement. [164631]

Estelle Morris: NESTA has recruited a National and Regional Co-ordinator to develop and implement a strategic approach to ensuring equality of access to NESTA's programmes across the UK.

NESTA has commissioned research to examine how its processes might be refined to address regional imbalance and the report options for action will be considered by NESTA's Board of Trustees in April.

Physical Education

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of schoolchildren in Taunton participated in two or more hours of quality physical education and exercise in each week in the latest six months for which figures are available. [164560]

Mr. Caborn: The information is not held in the format requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The Impact of School Sport Partnerships' (published in March 2004 by DfES and DCMS) set out the early funding of the 2003–04 PE, School Sport and Club Links survey. Overall 61 per cent. of pupils in phase 1 school sport partnership schools spend at least two hours in a typical week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the

curriculum. A copy of the report has been placed in the House of Commons Library. The results of the full survey will be published in April.

Sport and Physical Activity Board

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on how many occasions the cross-departmental Sport and Physical Activity Board has met. [164571]

Mr. Caborn: The Activity Co-ordination Team, formerly the Sport and Physical Activity Board, which I jointly chair with my hon. Friend the Minister for Public Health has met on five occasions since July 2003.

DEFENCE

Challenger 2

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Challenger 2 tanks he plans to sell; and to which countries. [163853]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently no plans to sell Challenger 2 tanks.

Defence Medicine Centre

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the reason is for the cancellation of the plan to develop a Royal College of Defence Medicine Centre at Selly Oak, Birmingham; and what alternative plans there are to provide for the centre. [164052]

Mr. Caplin: We remain committed to developing the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine in the Birmingham area. Use of the Selly Oak site for this purpose has not been ruled out and remains one of a number of options currently under consideration.

Gulf War Syndrome

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to carry out checks on results following the publication of the research study of miscarriages and birth defects amongst the children of Gulf War veterans; and if he will set up an independent inquiry into all reports of serious health problems amongst veterans. [164190]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 29 March 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made on 24 March 2004, *Official Report*, column WS44. In addition, the researchers have identified some additional work that is being undertaken within the scope of the original research. With regard to miscarriage, the researchers are looking into measures of infertility as this often relates to early miscarriage. On renal anomalies, a more in-depth study of the diagnosis within this group is being conducted.

The Government are not convinced that an independent inquiry would help. The possibility that we may look again at this matter has not been ruled out but, in the present circumstances, it is only through the programme of research initiated by the Government that we are ever likely to be able to establish the causes of Gulf veterans' illnesses.

HIV/AIDS

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what HIV/AIDS programme is in place for British armed forces who spend time in sub-Saharan African countries. [164419]

Mr. Ingram: Guidance on HIV/AIDS for members of the Armed Forces is based on guidelines issued by the UK Chief Medical Officer's Expert Advisory Group on AIDS. The prevention and management of HIV infection is part of a general strategy for the promotion of good sexual health and for the protection of personnel against blood borne viruses.

Before deployment to sub-Saharan Africa Service personnel receive a health brief and are warned that the HIV/AIDS virus is a major medical threat. The educational message for operational deployments makes it clear that sexual abstinence is the only safe form of action with risk reduction only as a last resort.

Service personnel are instructed in the use of condoms as a means of protection against STDs, including HIV/AIDS, as well as a form of contraception. On occasions where condoms are not readily available, they may be distributed to Service personnel.

Service personnel who think they have been at risk are encouraged to consult their medical officer for discussion about the virus and possible referral for testing. Alternatively, Service personnel can also go directly to an NHS STI clinic for testing and/or counselling.

Iraq

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what efforts are being made by the Iraqi Survey Group to use the serial numbers on weapons found in Iraq to trace *(a)* where and *(b)* when the weapons were made. [163383]

Mr. Hoon: The Iraqi Survey Group (ISG) is responsible for the assessment of Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction programmes. In general, the ISG does not have a requirement to use serial numbers to establish the origins and age of weapons.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Iraqi security personnel have been trained by British forces; and how many Iraqi army personnel are operational in the British sector of control. [162952]

Mr. Ingram: As at 25 March 2004 there were around 36,800 Iraqi security personnel in the Multinational Division (Southeast) area, of whom 750 are members of the New Iraqi Army.

Some 14,600 personnel have completed at least basic training.

Operational Vehicles

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many operational *(a)* Challenger 2 tanks, *(b)* warrior vehicles, *(c)* FU430, *(d)* Sabre, *(e)* Spartan and *(f)* AS90 vehicles there are; what percentage of the fleet this represents in each case; and what percentage of target availability this represents in each case. [163626]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Stock Reduction

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the changes to stock reduction targets for slow-moving stock and consumables have been, following the undertaking by his Department in its response to the 13th report of the Committee of Public Accounts in Session 2002–03, MoD: Progress in Reducing Stocks, to revisit them. [163933]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 29 March 2004]:* Since June 2003, stock reduction targets for slow-moving stock and consumables have been re-visited. As a result of this work, financial provision targets have been replaced by actual stock disposal targets at gross book value. These revised targets were disaggregated and issued in January 2004 to individual budget holders and are being monitored to ensure that the progress required is being made.

The new targets are detailed in the table:

Million

	Disposal targets
2003–04	259.4
2004–05	180.9
2005–06	153.0
Total	593.3

Departmental Timber Purchases

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the purchases of wood originating from Tasmania the Department has made in each year since 1997. [164050]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* The Ministry of Defence requires suppliers of timber to obtain evidence that the timber supplied complies with Government policy. The country of origin is not recorded separately and therefore the information requested is not available.

Ulster Defence Regiment (Records)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence where the search records of the *(a)* 7 City of Belfast battalion of the Ulster Defence Regiment, *(b)* 10 City of Belfast battalion of the Ulster Defence Regiment, *(c)* 3 County Down battalion of the Ulster Defence Regiment and *(d)* regular military units operating in their tactical area of responsibility for the night of 17 February 1978 are held; by what method they are stored; and whether they are a matter of public record. [164431]

Mr. Ingram: The search records of all military units in Northern Ireland are held manually in paper format in the Northern Ireland Search Report Archive at 25 Engineer Regiment, Antrim. Reports of any searches, which did not produce a find, are routinely destroyed after six years when the statute of limitation for claims runs out. Records of productive searches may be held indefinitely in the archives and are subsequently reviewed in accordance with the terms of the Public Records Act, 1958 and 1967. However, I can confirm that there are no search records held prior to 1990.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Register of Interests

Bob Spink: To ask the Leader of the House what the requirements are on officials in his Office to declare current interests; and what register of interests is kept for his officials. [164698]

Mr. Hain: The Civil Service Management Code sets out the requirement for civil servants declaring any conflict of interest (http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/civilservice/managementcode/index.asp).

Details of individual interests declared and of approvals to undertake activities outlined in these codes of conduct are held on personal files.

TRANSPORT

Speed Cameras

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport *(a)* how many speed cameras there were and *(b)* what amount of revenue was raised, in each region in each year since 1997. [143347]

Mr. Jamieson: My Department holds information on speed cameras operated under the Speed Camera Programme for funding of approved cameras from fixed fine receipts, which began with seven Safety Camera Partnership areas in England and Wales in April 2000, increasing to 14 in 2001 and to 28 during 2002. The numbers of approved fixed and mobile speed camera sites for those partnership areas are:

As at end of year	*Fixed camera sites*	*Mobile camera sites*	*Total*
2000–01	311	242	553
2001–02	706	541	1,247
2002–03	1,387	1,528	2,915

My Department plans shortly to publish information on the number of safety camera locations for all Safety Camera Partnerships in England and Wales together with collision and casualty information.

Prior to the Safety Camera Programme, police and highway authorities have used cameras since 1991, under the Road Traffic Act 1991 and the Department of Transport Circular 1/92 "Use of technology for traffic enforcement: Guidance on deployment". My Department does not hold information centrally on cameras which are not part of the Safety Camera Programme.

The conditional offer fixed penalty fines for speeding and traffic light offences from the partnerships, from the audited figures available for 2000–01 and 2001–02 were:

£

	Fine revenue
2000–01	
Cleveland	898,960
Essex	1,843,480
Lincolnshire	627,000
Nottingham	555,360
Northants	2,167,840
South Wales	1,567,000
Thames Valley	2,239,120
	9,898,760
2001–02	
Cleveland	855,480
Essex	3,524,120
Lincolnshire	1,059,680
Nottingham	812,640
Northants	2,967,640
South Wales	1,876,240
Thames Valley	4,672,880
Cambridgeshire	135,420
Derbyshire	654,000
Lancashire	1,197,180
Norfolk	160,140
North Wales	648,780
Staffordshire	631,260
Warwickshire	204,300
Total	19,302,536

Note:

Separate figures are not available for speeding offences only.
Information on 2002–03 fine revenue will be available shortly.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many speed cameras have been erected in each county in England in each year since 1997. [163804]

Mr. Jamieson: My Department plans shortly to publish information on the safety camera sites in all Safety Camera Partnerships, which currently cover 38 of the 43 police authority areas in England and Wales. Information is not held centrally on safety cameras operated by police and highway authorities which do not participate in the partnership scheme.

Bicycle Helmets

Jane Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assistance his Department and its predecessor Departments have given to the Bicycle Helmet Initiative Trust in each of the last five years; upon what conditions such assistance was given; and if he will make a statement. [164164]

Mr. Jamieson: We work closely with the Bicycle Helmet Initiative Trust (BHIT), including the provision of grant aid for initiatives which contribute to the Government's cycling objectives. I helped launch the BHIT's "Guidelines for Setting up Community Based Bicycle Helmet Programmes" in May 2002. They are the result of three years work funded by a joint package with the Department of Health of £100,000. BHIT also received funding to produce a similar School Based set of Guidelines, which were sent to all schools in July 2003.

The BHIT has received further funding from the Department of Health for three years. The DoH gave BHIT £32,000 in 2002–03, £25,000 in 2003–04, and will be giving £20,000 in 2004–05 for their Helmet Your Head project. The project was funded as part of the DoH's target for the Health Service to contribute to accident prevention and especially injury reduction among children.

We have given grant aid to other organisations who are pursuing initiatives which support the aims of our road safety strategy, such as RoSPA, for their "Guidelines for Child Cycle Training" and the CTC for their "Adult Cycle Training Schemes Guidelines".

Buses

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what figures he uses for the cost of *(a)* a bendy bus and *(b)* a conventional double decker bus when calculating grants to local authorities for their transport plans. [164833]

Dr. Howells: Allocations for local transport funding in England (outside London) are calculated to reflect the achievement of each local transport authority in delivering the aims and objectives in its Local Transport Plan. Information on the type of buses used by local operators does not form part of the calculation.

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* British built and *(b)* German built buses have caught fire and burnt out in the last year in the UK. [164149]

Dr. Howells: We only have records relating to six incidents in 2003—these were cases where the police asked for the Department to help with investigations.

Five of these cases involved British-built vehicles, and all were caused by maintenance defects.

We have no record of any German-built vehicles being involved in fires during 2003.

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what regulatory action he is proposing to improve safety on bendy buses. [164146]

Dr. Howells: We do not as yet know exactly what has caused the problems with these buses, so it is too early to speculate on whether any additional regulatory action may be necessary.

We are monitoring the situation closely and will be reviewing the situation both with the vehicle manufacturers and the bus operators. In the meantime all the potentially at-risk vehicles have been taken out of service pending the completion of remedial work.

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the most recent average occupancy figure is of the London bendy buses. [164147]

Dr. Howells: The average number of passengers travelling at any one time in an articulated "bendy bus" in London was 24, when surveyed by Transport for London in mid 2003.

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many seats a London bendy bus has. [164148]

Dr. Howells: The articulated "bendy buses" on services in London have 49 passenger seats. There is also provision for a passenger in a wheelchair.

Driving Test Hazard Perception Test

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what evaluation of the recently introduced Driving Test Hazard Perception Test his Department has carried out; and if he will make a statement; [163349]

(2) what research his Department carried out in preparation for the introduction of the Driving Test Hazard Perception Test; and if he will make a statement; [163350]

(3) what research his Department has carried out on the reaction of people from different age groups to the new Driving Test Hazard Perception Test; and if he will make a statement; [163351]

(4) what plans his Department has to modify the content of format of the new Driving Test Hazard Perception Test; and if he will make a statement. [163352]

Mr. Jamieson: Hazard perception testing for learner car, lorry and bus drivers, motorcyclists and prospective driving instructors was introduced in November 2002 as part of the qualifying theory test. The pass mark for the hazard perception part of the test has been progressively raised since introduction as instructors and their pupils became accustomed to the new assessment.

Following feedback from candidates that they did not fully understand what they were required to do in the hazard perception part of the theory test, the tutorial video that candidates are shown at the start of that part of the test was revised last December. Since then, the pass rates for the hazard perception part of the test have increased significantly:

Percentage

	November 2002	*December 2003*	*February 2004*
Car	79	69	80
Motorcycle	93	81	89
Lorry	80	69	79
Bus	80	66	76
Driving Instructor	66	56	64

Research over a 10 year period by the Transport Research Laboratory into the importance of hazard awareness in collision prevention indicated that performance in tests of hazard perception improved as experience is gained. The research showed that experienced drivers performed better than new drivers, who in turn performed better than learner drivers.

The film clips used in the hazard perception assessment were trialled before introduction to determine their effectiveness at discriminating between drivers on the ground of their experience. Calibration trials and analysis then took place to identify an appropriate mix of clips to ensure individual tests were of similar difficulty.

Customer satisfaction surveys and focus groups conducted by the Driving Standards Agency explore customer reactions to all aspects of the testing process, including the hazard perception assessment. The research does not differentiate between test candidates based upon their age.

We have no plans to change the format of the hazard perception assessment. We do, however, plan to extend the computerised assessment, together with multiple-choice questions of knowledge and understanding, to the existing standards supervision for all registered driving instructors later this year.

Focus Groups and Opinion Polls

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his estimate is of total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* focus groups and *(b)* opinion polls in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [162759]

Mr. McNulty: Estimated out-turn in 2003–04, will be £493,065 on focus groups of which £296,070 relates to the consultation for the white paper on the future of air transport and £156,595 to the THINK! road safety publicity campaign. In 2002–03, the Department spent £53,439 on focus groups all of which was in support of THINK!. In addition £50,792 was spent on opinion polls over a 16 month period straddling both the financial years 2002–03 and 2003–04.

Costs for earlier years before the Department for Transport was formed could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Research is widely used to inform the development, delivery and evaluation of policy and publicity. Focus group work to inform the development of our long term £14 million a year THINK! road safety publicity campaign, which keeps road safety high in the publics consciousness, involves testing attitudes and creative ideas. The end results of any focus group research that we carry out in this context are in the public domain in the form of THINK! campaign material.

All contracts are let in accordance with agreed tendering procedures and are subject to the usual rules that spending should represent good value for money.

Motor Insurance and Driving Licences

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to require motorists to display *(a)* proof of insurance and *(b)* a licence alongside their tax discs. [163513]

Mr. Jamieson: The Government are determined to tackle the menace of uninsured driving. We have commissioned Professor David Greenaway to conduct an independent review of the motor insurance industry with special reference to uninsured driving. The report is due to be delivered to Ministers next month and the recommendations for reducing the level of uninsured driving will be examined in detail. Although not ruling out the display of insurance discs we would not wish to pre-empt the findings of the review and intend to await the outcome before deciding on the next steps.

Motorways

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many designated parking areas there are

for police patrol vehicles alongside motorway hard shoulders; what the total cost of constructing such areas has been; and how many further such areas are planned. [164274]

Dr. Howells: There are 358 designated parking areas for police patrol vehicles alongside motorway hard shoulders on England's motorway network. Many of the designated parking areas were constructed as part of motorway building schemes and it is not possible to provide the total cost of constructing them.

Currently, one further designated parking area is planned for construction on the M56 in Lancashire. The requirement for additional areas is kept under review through regular liaison meetings with the relevant police authorities.

Network Rail

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a copy of the letter of comfort given to Network Rail on its refinancing programme through bonds. [163126]

Mr. McNulty: A draft of the comfort letter was attached to the Secretary of State's minute to the House of 4 February 2004 about new non-statutory contingent liabilities in support of Network Rail's Medium Term Note borrowing programme.

Rail Services (Kent)

Jonathan Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what estimate he has made of the number of passengers travelling from the Medway Towns to Cannon Street; what assessment he has made of the likely impact on commuter services from the Medway Towns to Cannon Street of the Strategic Rail Authority's Integrated Kent Franchise proposals; and if he will make a statement; [162505]

(2) what discussions he has had with the Strategic Rail Authority regarding the current fast Medway Towns to Victoria service in the context of the Strategic Rail Authority's proposed Integrated Kent Franchise. [162508]

Mr. McNulty: Proposals for the detailed train service specification for the Integrated Kent Franchise are currently being consulted upon by the Strategic Rail Authority. Recommended service patterns and its impacts on existing services will be considered following the completion of the consultation.

Jonathan Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans the Strategic Rail Authority has to improve rail infrastructure in north Kent; and if he will make a statement. [162507]

Mr. McNulty: There is considerable work under way in north Kent, as part of the power supply upgrade (Southern Region New Trains Programme). This will enable operation in north Kent of Class 375 and 376 trains. The train maintenance depot at Slade Green is being refurbished. Security enhancements are being made where trains are stabled.

Jonathan Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many seats *(a)* are available to commuters from the Medway Towns to London and *(b)* are estimated will be available under the Strategic Rail Authority's proposed Integrated Kent Franchise at peak times as defined by the Strategic Rail Authority in their Integrated Kent Franchise proposals. [162509]

Mr. McNulty: There are over 20,000 seats available on services from the Medway Towns to London in the morning peak and over 21,000 from London to the Medway Towns in the evening peak.

The number of seats available under the proposed Integrated Kent Franchise will depend on the type of rolling stock ordered for channel tunnel rail link domestic services.

WALES

Civil Servants

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many civil servants were employed in the Welsh Office in each year between 1979 and 1999. [160931]

Mr. Touhig: The Welsh Office ceased to exist on 1 July 1999. The number of civil servants employed in the Welsh Office between 1979 and 1998 are shown in the table:

	Total employed
1979	2,600
1980	2,363
1981	2,279
1982	2,201
1983	2,176
1984	2,206
1985	2,283
1986	2,250
1987	2,208
1988	2,185
1989	2,220
1990	2,352
1991	2,400
1992	2,407
1993	2,408
1994	2,334
1995	2,194
1996	2,133
1997	2,178
1998	2,269

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many civil servants for whom his Department is responsible there were in each year since 1997; and what the cost of salary payments was in each year. [161196]

Mr. Touhig: Staff numbers for the Wales Office, since its establishment on 1 July 1999, are shown in table 5.7 of the Wales Departmental Report 2003 (CM 5928), a copy of which can be obtained from the Library of the House. Paybill data are contained within Annex 3 of the same publication.

Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many cases of computer misuse there were in *(a)* the predecessor to his Department in each year

between 1997 and 1999 and *(b)* his Department in 2003, broken down by category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [163251]

Mr. Touhig: There are no records of any computer misuse occurring at the Welsh Office between the years 1997 and 1999.

There was one incident of possible misuse in 2003 involving prohibited sites. The person involved left the Wales Office before the investigation was completed so no disciplinary action resulted.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Conferences

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many conferences he and his Ministers attended in the UK and abroad in the year to 29 February; and what the cost of attending was, broken down by *(a)* travel costs, *(b)* food and drink, *(c)* accommodation and *(d)* miscellaneous costs. [160706]

Hilary Benn *[holding answer 12 March 2004]:* The Cabinet Office publishes an annual publication that provides details of overseas travel by Cabinet Ministers and expenditure incurred. Copies of the publication are available in the Libraries of the House. The annual publication covering 2003–04 will be published in due course. All DFID ministerial travel is undertaken in line with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers.

As Secretary of State for International Development I attended one conference in the UK in February. The previous Secretary of State also attended a conference in June as did I when I was Minister of State. Both of these were in London and did not incur any cost.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State has attended three conferences in the UK in the year to 29 February. Only one of these incurred an additional cost to the Department of £37 for a train fare. The other two were held in Central London.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many *(a)* non-ministerial staff and *(b)* special advisers in his Department attended conferences in the UK and abroad in the year to 29 February; and what the cost of attending was, broken down by (i) travel costs, (ii) food and drink, (iii) accommodation and (iv) miscellaneous costs. [160708]

Hilary Benn *[holding answer 12 March 2004]:* It is not possible to provide information on non-ministerial staff attendance at conferences either in the UK or abroad without incurring disproportionate cost, apart from the following information:

A special adviser has attended one conference in the UK. The total cost of attending this was £895. This cost included accommodation and food. Travel cost approximately £20.

Employment Agencies

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the employment agencies which his Department has used to supply temporary staff in each financial year since 1996–97 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [163810]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development has used the following employment agencies to supply temporary administrative staff for all of the financial years from 1996–97 to 2003–04:

Josephine Sammons, 46 Fish Street Hill, EC3R 6ER

Office Angels, 71–75 Buckingham Palace Road, SW1W OQU

Adecco, 133 Victoria Street, SW1V 6RD

Manpower, Kingsgate Parade, 66–74 Victoria Street, SW1E 6SH

Reed Employment Services, Fairgate House, 78 New Oxford Street, WC1A 1HB

Kelly Services, 1st Floor, Princes Mall, G74 1LB

Margaret Hodge Recruitment (formerly Joyce Young Recruitment), Floor 10, Plaza Tower, G741LW

DFID has also used:

Select Appointments, 300–310 Vauxhall Bridge Road, SW1V 1AA, from 2000–01 to 2003–04.

Human Rights and Democracy Projects

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what his Department's involvement was in the 2002 European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy projects on *(a)* inter-communal youth centres in Georgia, *(b)* access to justice for ethnic minorities in Russia and *(c)* educating indigenous people in Siberia; and what assessment he has made of each project; [163875]

(2) what his Department's involvement was in the 2002 European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy project on improving indigenous multiculturalism through education in *(a)* Russia, *(b)* Ukraine, *(c)* Georgia, *(d)* Armenia, *(e)* Croatia, *(f)* Serbia, *(g)* Bosnia and Herzegovina, *(h)* Kosovo, *(i)* Bulgaria and *(j)* Poland; and what assessment he has made of the results of each project; [163913]

(3) what his Department's involvement was in the 2002 European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy projects on the prevention of torture in *(a)* Russia, *(b)* the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, *(c)* Serbia, *(d)* Bulgaria, *(e)* Hungary, *(f)* Poland, *(g)* Latvia, *(h)* Lithuania and *(i)* Estonia; and what assessment he has made of each project. [163935]

Mr. Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

Decisions about the individual projects funded by the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights are made by the European Commission and by local EC delegations. They are also responsible for managing and evaluating the projects. The EU Committee on Human Rights and Democracy allocates EU budget resources to projects in third countries and is responsible for evaluating the impact of the fund. The UK is represented on the Committee by officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the UK Permanent Representation to the EU.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what his Department's involvement was in the 2002 European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy project to *(a)* reinforce

diversity in Russia and *(b)* deliver an information campaign on the fight against racism and xenophobia in Russia; and what assessment he has made of each project; [163877]

(2) what his Department's involvement was in the 2002 European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy's project on reinforcing federalism, democracy and mechanisms of protection of human rights in Russia; and what assessment he has made of the project. [163998]

Mr. Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

Decisions about the individual projects funded by the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights are made by the European Commission and local EC delegations. They are also responsible for managing and evaluating the projects. The EU Committee on Human Rights and democracy allocates EU budget resources to projects in third countries and is responsible for evaluating the impact of the fund. The UK is represented on the Committee by officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the UK Permanent Representation to the EU. The British embassy in Moscow keeps in close touch with the local Commission delegation.

Science Strategy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he has taken to enhance science in his Department since the publication of the Government's science strategy Investing in Innovation. [162250]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development has maintained its commitment to the use of science for policy making and delivery, and our investment in science and research is set to increase from the current £80 million per financial year to at least £100 million by 2006–07. Details are set out in the Forward Look 2003 on Government funded science, engineering and technology.

Together with other departments, DFID is improving the way it uses science in its policy work—building on the recommendations of the Cross Cutting Review (CCR) and Investing in Innovation—and the CCR implementation plan being pursued in cooperation with the Office of Science and Technology (OST).

Specifically, DFID is developing a new research strategy, the draft of which will be published shortly for consultation. The draft will set out DFID's main areas of focus and proposals for future spending, including African agricultural productivity, the killer diseases for the poor, climate change, and long-run social and political changes. DFID will also publish a document on how it uses science, with examples of research capacity building efforts in developing countries.

DFID will appoint two experienced scientists—one recommended by the Government's Chief Scientist—to conduct a review of scientific advice in DFID and the case for appointing a Chief Scientist. The Department will also set up a new advisory board, which would include an eminent scientist and representatives from developing countries. The board will at its first meeting consider DFID's contribution to building science capacity in the developing world.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Blood Supplies

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the implications are for Northern Ireland of the Department of Health's decision not to allow blood donations from those who received transfusions since 1980. [164920]

Angela Smith: The decision to exclude anyone who received a blood transfusion in the United Kingdom since 1980 from donating blood will apply in Northern Ireland with effect from 5 April 2004. This is expected to result in a 3.3 per cent. reduction in blood donations, reducing blood donations in Northern Ireland by about 2,300 units of blood per year. Measures are being planned to ensure that adequate blood supplies are maintained, including promotional campaigns and increased donor sessions.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many donors he expects to be excluded from the blood donor register in Northern Ireland as a result of the recent decision to exclude recipients of blood transfusions from donating blood. [164352]

Angela Smith: The decision to exclude anyone who received a blood transfusion in the UK since 1980 from donating blood is expected to lead to a loss of 3.2 per cent. donors. In Northern Ireland this will exclude over 2,200 people who are currently registered as active donors.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has held with his colleagues in the Department of Health on the recent decision to exclude recipients of blood transfusions from donating blood. [164353]

Angela Smith: The decision to exclude anyone who received a blood transfusion in the United Kingdom since 1980 from donating blood was based on the advice of the Committee on Microbiological Safety of Blood and Tissues for Transplantation (MSBT). MSBT is convened by the Department of Health and acts as a UK wide advisory committee. It has two members from Northern Ireland, including a representative of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the implications for Northern Ireland of the recent decision of the Secretary of State for Health to exclude recipients of blood transfusions from donating blood; whether such restrictions apply to Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [164354]

Angela Smith: The decision to exclude anyone who received a blood transfusion in the United Kingdom since 1980 from donating blood will apply in Northern Ireland, with effect from 5 April 2004. This precautionary measure to ensure the safety of blood has the potential to affect blood supplies. Measures are planned to ensure that adequate blood supplies are maintained and that blood is used appropriately.

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland by how much he expects the level of blood supplies will decrease following the recent decision to prohibit the acceptance of blood from those who have had blood transfusions. [163966]

Angela Smith: The decision to exclude anyone who received a blood transfusion in the UK since 1980 from donating blood is expected to result in a 3.3 per cent. reduction in blood donations. In effect this will reduce blood donations in Northern Ireland by about 2,300 units of blood per year. Measures are being planned to ensure that adequate blood supplies are maintained, including promotional campaigns and increased donor sessions.

Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many NHS hospital beds are allocated for the treatment of teenage and young adult patients with cancer in Northern Ireland. [163887]

Angela Smith: HSS Trusts in Northern Ireland have advised that there are 10 beds open overnight which are specifically designated for the treatment of teenage and young adult patients with cancer. Should the need exceed this provision, other beds not specifically designated for the treatment of this particular age-group may be made available for teenagers and young adults.

Citizenship Ceremony

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the first citizenship ceremony in Northern Ireland to take place; and with what frequency he expects them to occur. [164355]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The first citizenship ceremony in Northern Ireland is scheduled to take place on 4 June 2004. The number and frequency of future ceremonies will depend on the number of applications received. Current estimates are that there will be four ceremonies per year in Northern Ireland.

Focus Groups

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his estimate is of total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* focus groups and *(b)* opinion polls in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [162756]

Mr. Paul Murphy: In relation to the expenditure of the Northern Ireland Office on attitudinal research between 1997 and 2003, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given by my hon. Friend the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary, on 13 May 2003, *Official Report*, column 206W. Expenditure in 1995–96 was £11,750. Overall expenditure on attitudinal research for the financial year 2003–04 is not yet available, although £27,480 + vat has been identified to date.

Within the Northern Ireland administration this information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Housing Executive

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures the Northern Ireland Housing Executive is undertaking to address the problems faced by the organisation in relation to recruiting people from all sections of the community in Northern Ireland. [164160]

Mr. Spellar: Where monitoring shows that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's recruitment processes delivers differential outcomes, it initiates an affirmative action programme which aims to encourage full participation of the community in securing employment within the organisation. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Affirmative Action Plan addresses areas of under-representation in relation to gender, disability and the other equality groups identified in the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The main measures the Northern Ireland Housing Executive takes include:

(i) the extension of external recruitment to cover entry level and key recruitment grades;

(ii) the promotion of careers within the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in publications where there is under representation; and

(iii) developing links with schools and training organisations in areas where under representation exists.

Laganside Development

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the capital investment by Government Departments in the Laganside development in Belfast has been; and how much money has been earmarked by Government for the capitalisation of the Ilex Corporation in Derry to develop the Ministry of Defence lands. [162936]

Mr. Spellar: The information is as follows:

Laganside

The amount of capital investment by Government Departments in the Laganside Development in Belfast from 1989 until now has been £129 million.

Laganside will wind up some time in the future by which time many of the capital assets will be either sold off, net proceeds being transferred back to the Department for Social Development, or some assets such as the Lagan Walkway and Weir (value £35 million) being retained in public ownership.

Ilex

Government expect shortly to receive an interim bid for funding from Ilex Urban Regeneration Company, under the Integrated Development Fund in advance of an Integrated Development Plan for the North West. This plan will inform future capital investment decisions.

There are plans for the Department for Social Development to acquire the Fort George site later in 2004 for £12 million. The Ebrington site (value circa £4 million) was transferred at nil cost to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in December 2003 as part of the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative. It was also recently announced that Government have agreed in principle to acquire the Clooney Barracks site however the transfer value has yet to be determined.

Murder Investigations

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total financial cost has been of investigations into the murder of *(a)* Mr. Patrick Kelly on 10 August 1974 and *(b)* Mr. Robert Jameson on 17 January 1974, both of Trillick. [162708]

Jane Kennedy: In view of the significant time which has elapsed since these two murders, an estimate of the costs of the associated police investigations could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Organ Retention

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether relatives of those who had coroners' post mortems will be invited to planned memorials for the victims of organ retention in Northern Ireland. [164577]

Angela Smith: The Department is engaged in ongoing discussions with Belfast city council, Derry city council and the Relatives' Reference Group about the location of suitable memorials for those affected by the retention of human organs and tissue. Relatives of those who were affected, whether through coroners' or hospital post mortem examinations, will be most welcome to attend any future service of dedication of the memorials.

Phoenix Natural Gas

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with representatives of Phoenix Natural Gas on the recent increase in gas prices; and if he will make a statement. [164390]

Mr. Pearson: I have met with the Chairman and Chief Executive of Phoenix Natural Gas to express my deep concerns over proposed gas price increases in Northern Ireland. I have also been in contact with all the parties concerned including the Northern Ireland Authority for Energy Regulation (NIAER), the General Consumer Council (NI), National Energy Action and the Department of Social Development who have responsibility for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Fuel Poverty. I have also met a delegation of NI political representatives from all the major political parties to hear their concerns. I have asked NIAER to carry out an urgent investigation into the proposed increase and the circumstances leading up to Phoenix's announcement on 19 March, and to report to me by 31 March 2004.

Post Mortems

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what procedures relatives will be required to use to obtain tissue from consented hospital and coroner post mortems when the new legislation is implemented. [164576]

Angela Smith: In January 2004 I launched a public consultation document entitled "Post Mortem Examinations—Good Practice in Consent and the Care of the Bereaved". It contains new draft consent forms and guidance, which address relatives' wishes for the return or disposal of tissue. It also takes account of the provisions of the new Human Tissue Bill currently before Parliament. The consultation period ends on 27 April 2004 and it is anticipated that the Department will issue final guidance to the HPSS towards the end of 2004. This will be made available to relatives through the Relatives' Reference Group and the Department's web site. It is too early at this stage to say what the new procedures will be but the principle of consent will underpin them all.

Pulmonary Hypertension

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the provisions in Northern Ireland for sufferers of pulmonary hypertension. [164541]

Angela Smith: Pulmonary hypertension is a rare abnormality and is managed within existing specialty areas including cardiology, general medicine, respiratory medicine and in the case of children, paediatrics. Each case is managed individually, with treatment provided appropriate to the patient's particular needs.

Royal Ulster Constabulary

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the search and log records of the Royal Ulster Constabulary for the night of 17 February 1978 are still held. [162688]

Jane Kennedy: The Police Service of Northern Ireland has carried out a review of the investigation file and HM Coroner's reports relating to the La Mon bombing. However search papers and logs for the night of 17 February 1978 have not been retained within these papers.

Unionist Paramilitaries

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assistance Unionist political parties are giving the police in curbing the criminal activities of Unionist paramilitary groups. [162594]

Jane Kennedy: The Police Service of Northern Ireland does not categorise any paramilitary group as Unionist. The category used is Loyalist. Unionist political parties have publicly stated their support for the police in their efforts to tackle the criminal activities of Loyalist paramilitary groups. Representatives of Unionist parties also sit on the Policing Board and show their further support for the police at community level by participating in the local District Policing Partnerships.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefits

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make it his policy to pay *(a)* bereavement benefit and *(b)* invalid care allowance without deductions arising from the payment of both benefits; and if he will make a statement. [164035]

Mr. Pond: It is a basic principle of the social security system that two benefits at a time cannot be paid for the same purpose. Even though the circumstances which give rise to entitlement to Carer's Allowance and Bereavement Benefit are different, they are both

designed to provide a degree of replacement for lost or foregone income. Carer's Allowance replaces income where the carer has had to give up the chance of working to look after a severely disabled person, while Bereavement Benefit replaces income following the death of a spouse.

Carer's Allowance is therefore not payable, or not payable in full, in addition to Bereavement Benefit. The payment of Bereavement Benefit takes precedence, either extinguishing or reducing the payment of Carer's Allowance. Nevertheless, the income of a person in these circumstances will be at least as high as the rate of Carer's Allowance, and is usually higher. In addition, where the benefit cannot be paid, the person will keep underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance, which gives them access to the carer premium in the income-related benefits such as Income Support, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

We have no plans to change these arrangements.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many individuals living in *(a)* York and *(b)* North Yorkshire were in receipt of (i) state retirement pension and (ii) other benefits in (A) 1997 and (B) each year since then; [162961]

(2) how many claims for benefits and pensions were made by people living in *(a)* York and *(b)* North Yorkshire in each year since 1997. [162977]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested concerning the total number of claims for benefits or pensions is not available. The available information is in the tables.

Working age claimants of key benefits in York

	Number
November 1997	11,400
November 1998	11,200
November 1999	10,800
November 2000	10,400
November 2001	10,500
November 2002	9,600
November 2003	9,400

Working age claimants of key benefits in North Yorkshire

	Number
November 1997	33,500
November 1998	33,800
November 1999	33,300
November 2000	31,700
November 2001	31,300
November 2002	31,300
November 2003	31,300

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Key benefits are Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Incapacity Benefit (IB), Severe Disablement Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Income Support and National Insurance credits only (through JSA or IB).

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. samples.

Key benefit recipients over state pension age by benefit combination in York

Benefits	*1999*[1]	*2000*[1]	*2001*[1]	*2002*[1]	*2003*[1]
State Pension	27,300	26,900	27,000	27,300	26,700
State Pension and DLA	900	1,000	1,000	1,100	1,100
State Pension and AA	2,200	2,200	2,200	2,400	2,300
State Pension, MIG/Pension Credit	1,800	2,000	2,200	2,100	2,800
State Pension, MIG/Pension Credit and DLA	*200	*200	*200	*200	*300
State Pension, MIG/Pension Credit and AA	1,000	1,000	900	1,000	1,100
Other combinations	*400	*200	*200	*300	*200
All	33,800	33,500	33,700	34,400	34,500

Key benefit recipients over state pension age by benefit combination in North Yorkshire

Benefits	*1999*[1]	*2000*[1]	*2001*[1]	*2002*[1]	*2003*[1]
State Pension	90,600	90,200	90,100	90,300	89,500
State Pension and DLA	3,000	3,300	3,800	3,800	4,000
State Pension and AA	8,000	8,500	8,300	9,200	9,200
State Pension and AA/DLA	*100	*100	*100	*100	*100
State Pension and MIG/Pension Credit	6,900	7,200	8,000	8,200	9,900
State Pension, MIG/Pension Credit and DLA	900	1,000	1,100	1,200	1,400
State Pension, MIG/Pension Credit and AA	3,300	3,400	3,600	3,400	4,000
Other combinations	1,300	1,200	1,100	1,100	1,200
All	114,100	114,900	116,000	117,300	119,300

[1] November.

Notes:
1. Figures are taken from a 5 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a high degree of sampling variation.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Numbers less than 500 and marked * are based on very few sample cases and are subject to a high degree of sampling variation.
4. Key Benefits are State Pension (SP), Incapacity Benefit (IB), Attendance Allowance (AA), Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Pension Credit (PC) and Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA).
5. Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) was introduced from 1999 and was replaced by Pension Credit with effect from 6 October 2003.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. samples.

Child Support Agency

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the target response times are for the Child Support Agency telephone helpline; and what the most recent performance delivery against these targets is. [162170]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Mike Isaac to Mr. Jon Trickett, dated 30 March 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. As he is currently on leave I am replying on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the targets response times are for the Child Support Agency telephone helpline; and what the most recent performance delivery against these targets is.

The Agency aims to answer 85% of calls received within 60 seconds. In February 2004 it answered 86.9% of calls within that timeframe.

Correspondence

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will answer question reference 147652, tabled by the hon. Member for Northavon on 8 January. [161624]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* An answer was given to the hon. Member today.

IT Projects

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list each information technology project being undertaken by his Department and its agencies, including the *(a)* start date, *(b)* the planned completion date, *(c)* the current expected completion date, *(d)* the planned cost and *(e)* the current estimated cost; and if he will make a statement. [147652]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 13 January 2004]:* The Department for Work and Pensions and its businesses currently have in excess of 100 individual projects which encompass information technology changes to a greater or lesser extent. The Department's major projects are those contained in the modernisation programme. For the most part, these projects embrace both information technology and business change. The following table lists the Department's current major programmes and projects that are based predominantly on IT change with information on schedules, budgets and achievements to date.

The "Planned Costs" column provides forecasts to project implementation. The "Current Authorised Expenditure" column gives expenditure authorised to the programme or project's next approval gate.

Expenditure on projects is formally approved by the Department's governance process and authorised through review gates. These reviews ensure that projects are meeting the standards we expect (including business change, technical and commercial criteria) before authority to progress to the next stage of their development.

It should be noted that project details may alter as they pass through the project lifecycle.

Department for Work and Pensions modernisation programme

Project	*Start date*	*Due end date*	*Expected end date*	*Planned costs (£ million)*	*Current authorised expenditure (£ million)*
Child Support Reform	September 1999	October 2004	Currently under review	400	400
Key achievements	Since 3 March 2003, new Child Support claims have been calculated using the new rules and new IT.				

Project	*Start date*	*Due end date*	*Expected end date*	*Planned costs (£ million)*	*Current authorised expenditure (£ million)*
Customer Management System	October 2001	March 2006	March 2006	300	150
Key achievements	This system currently being rolled out will allow information supplied by customers to be gathered electronically by staff, improving efficiency and customer service. Staff will be able to check information supplied against that already held and issue the customer with a Statement reflecting the information supplied.				

Project	*Start date*	*Due end date*	*Expected end date*	*Planned costs (£ million)*	*Current authorised expenditure (£ million)*
ISCS/JSAPS Modernisation Programme	August 2002	Various	[1]Various	20	20
Key achievements	The Department's updated IS/IT Strategy has identified new ways of delivering IT improvements at lower risk. The modernisation of our Income Support and Jobseekers Allowance systems is now being taken forward in line with updated IS/IT Strategy principles—for example, a preference for commercially available packages rather than bespoke development and staged incremental improvements rather than "big bang" replacement.				

[1] In line with the Department's IT Strategy, this programme has changed from system replacement to a rolling programme of incremental improvements.

Project	Start date	Due end date	Expected end date	Planned costs (£ million)	Current authorised expenditure (£ million)
Working Age IS/IT Strategy Programme	December 2003	Various	[2]Various	Under review	10
Key achievements	This is a new programme in its initial start-up phase.				

[2] This is a rolling programme of a number of business and IT improvement projects with individual start and completion dates.

Project	Start date	Due end date	Expected end date	Planned costs (£ million)	Current authorised expenditure (£ million)
New Tax Credits	April 2000	April 2005	April 2005	90	90
Key achievements	January 2003: IT Gateway between Inland Revenue and DWP went live.April 2003: Payment of new awards of Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit start. October 2003: 30,000 Minimum Income Guarantee child premium cases successfully completed.				

Project	Start date	Due end date	Expected end date	Planned costs (£ million)	Current authorised expenditure (£ million)
Digital Office Infrastructure	May 2000	June 2004	June 2004	750	745
Key achievements	DOI aims to implement a modern IT infrastructure platform across the department allowing staff access to modern business software. By February 2004, over 119,000 PCs had been rolled out (plus 23,000 installed in ex ES sites).				

Project	Start date	Due end date	Expected end date	Planned costs (£ million)	Current authorised expenditure (£ million)
Managing Core Systems Estate	November 2003	March 2006	March 2006	15	1
Key achievements	This is a new programme of enhancements to the Department's core systems and is in define and initiate stage.				

Project	Start date	Due end date	Expected end date	Planned costs (£ million)	Current authorised expenditure (£ million)
Pensions Forecasting Programme	September 1999	April 2005	April 2005	40	30
Key achievements	October 2001: Combined Pensions Forecasting service available.				

Project	Start date	Due end date	Expected end date	Planned costs (£ million)	Current authorised expenditure (£ million)
Pensions Credit	August 2001	October 2004	October 2004	285	255
Key achievements	April 2003: Advance application for Pension Credit invited.May 2003: Minimum Income Guarantee to Pension Credit—conversion started.January 2004: Pension Credit payable. 2.18 million pensioner households are now in receipt. Pension Credit Application Line have taken their millionth call.				

Project	Start date	Due end date	Expected end date	Planned costs (£ million)	Current authorised expenditure (£ million)
Pensions Transformation Project	January 2002	2006	2006	To be determined—project to be defined	95
Key achievements	This project is currently focusing on design and delivering changes to the Pension Service organisation, business processes, services and IT.				

Project	Start date	Due end date	Expected end date	Planned costs (£ million)	Current authorised expenditure (£ million)
Customer Information System	July 2003	October 2006	October 2006	50	10
Key achievements	This is a new project in its define and initiate stage.				

Project	Start date	Due end date	Expected end date	Planned costs (£ million)	Current authorised expenditure (£ million)
Payment Modernisation Programme	October 1999	December 2005	December 2005	465	200
Key achievements	From April 2003: Direct Payment became the normal method of payment for new customers. Benefit systems aligned to accommodate direct payments.				

Project	Start date	Due end date	Expected end date	Planned costs (£ million)	Current authorised expenditure (£ million)
Resource Management	April 2001	September 2006	September 2006	155	40
Key achievements	The project is configuring standard Oracle software and implementing best practice processes to replace the Department's existing resource management systems.				

Project	Start date	Due end date	Expected end date	Planned costs (£ million)	Current authorised expenditure (£ million)
Debt Management	November 2000	April 2005	April 2005	115	60
Key achievements	February 2004: Nine out of 10 Debt Centres now set-up.				

New Deal

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much funding has been provided to New Deal task forces in each year since 1998. [158230]

Mr. Browne: The information requested is as follows.

New Deal for Young People—spending on the environmental task force (ETF)

	£ million
1997–98[1]	0
1998–99[2]	15
1999–2000	42
2000–01	42
2001–02	42
2002–03	31
2003–04[3]	31

[1] New Deal for Young People (NDYP) started in January 1998. As participation in the NDYP Options normally commenced after a 4 month Gateway period, spend on the Options, including the ETF, was very small and has been rounded to zero.
[2] This corrects the figure that was given in my answer to the hon. Member for Havant (David Willetts), on 14 July 2003, *Official Report*, columns 78–79W.
[3] Estimated outturn.
[4] All figures are rounded to the nearest million.
Source:
Departmental Report 2003

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much money has so far been spent on each constituent element of the New Deal. [164042]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* The information is in the table.

£ million

	New Deal for Young People	New Deal 25 plus	New Deal 50 plus	New Deal for Lone Parents	New Deal for Disabled People	New Deal for Partners
1997–98	43	—	—	—	—	—
1998–99	260	34	—	18	1	1
1999–2000	370	97	3	39	22	5
2000–01	412	60	56	43	14	11
2001–02	308	213	87	46	10	8
2002–03	339	254	106	80	27	6
2003–04	340	255	56	82	27	11
Total	2,072	913	308	308	101	42

Notes:
1. All figures are outturn figures except; 2002–03 estimated outturn and, 2003–04 planned expenditure.
2. All figures are rounded to the nearest £ million
Source:
2003 DWP Departmental Report (Cm 5921)

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many asylum seekers are detained in Maghaberry Prison; and how many of those are *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* children; [162151]

(2) what the average length of stay was for an asylum seeker in the last two years at Maghaberry Prison. [162152]

Beverley Hughes: As at 27 December 2003—the latest available date for which data are available—120 individuals recorded as having sought asylum were detained in prisons in the UK. Of these, less than five were detained at HMP Maghaberry, all of whom were adult males. Minors may not be held at HMP Maghaberry. Information on the number of people detained as at 27 March 2004 will be published on the Home Office website (www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html) on 25 May 2004.

Information on the length of detention of individual detainees held at HMP Maghaberry is not available.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether asylum seekers detained at Maghaberry Prison are *(a)* subject to normal prison rules and *(b)* held separately from (i) sentenced and (ii) remand prisoners. [162168]

Beverley Hughes: Immigration detainees held at HMP Maghaberry are located on a separate landing in Mourne House and are separate from the main prison population. Detainees are subject to prison rules but are managed as untried prisoners, with a more favourable regime that is more akin to that of enhanced prisoners.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for how long Maghaberry Prison will be used to detain asylum seekers. [162235]

Beverley Hughes: Individual detainees are held for no longer than is necessary and we seek to ensure that any period of detention is kept to the minimum. An individual detainee who initially elected to remain at HMP Maghaberry rather than be transferred to an Immigration Service removal centre in Great Britain may at any time request to be transferred to such a removal centre.

More generally, we have no plans at present to end the use of HMP Maghaberry for the very small numbers of immigration detainees who express a preference to remain in Northern Ireland rather than be transferred to an Immigration Service removal centre in Great Britain. The small numbers of individuals concerned, usually less than 10 at any one time, would not be sufficient to make a dedicated detention facility in Northern Ireland viable to establish or operate.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of failed asylum seekers in the UK who are liable to be forcibly returned to Iraq. [162411]

Beverley Hughes: At present, removals to Iraq are on a voluntary basis, but on 24 February 2004 my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary announced that the UK was the first country to reach agreement with the Coalition Provisional Authority to begin enforced returns of failed Iraqi asylum seekers. The pilot scheme will begin in April and will allow 30 Iraqis per month to be returned initially; it will be linked to a package of assistance with accommodation and employment, and will operate alongside the voluntary returns programme.

Information on asylum applications is published quarterly. The next publication is due to be published on 25 May 2004 on the Home Office website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers have been forcibly removed to Afghanistan in each of the last five years. [162418]

Beverley Hughes: Information on the number of Afghan nationals who had claimed asylum at some stage that were removed from the United Kingdom from 1998 to September 2003 (the latest date for which data are available) is shown in the table.

Removals and voluntary[1] departures of principal asylum applicants (excluding dependants): January 1998 to September 2003[2,3,4]

	Afghanistan
1998	15
1999	n/a
2000	n/a
2001	125
2002[5]	395
January to September 2003[5]	460

n/a = Information not available due to data quality issues on IND databases.

[1] Including persons departing "voluntarily" after enforcement action had been initiated against them.

[2] May include removals to a safe third country.

[3] Data are rounded to nearest five with * denoting 1 or 2.

[4] Data are estimated due to data quality issues on the databases.

[5] Provisional figures.

These figures include those persons who departed "voluntarily" after enforcement action had been initiated against them and persons leaving under the Assisted Voluntary Returns Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration as well as those who were forcibly removed from the UK, however they are not separately identifiable. Information on the destination of those people who are removed is not available.

There were no enforced returns to Afghanistan prior to April 2003. A voluntary return programme, the Return to Afghanistan Programme (RAP) commenced on 20 August 2002. Enforced returns operate under the tripartite Agreement between the United Kingdom, United Nations High Commission for Refugees and Afghan Transitional Administration and flights to Kabul commenced on 28 April 2003.

Alcohol Misuse (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he plans to take to tackle alcohol misuse in Greater London. [163063]

Ms Blears: On 15 March 2004 the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit published a "Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England". The Strategy sets out the Government plans to combat the range of problems caused by alcohol misuse in England. The majority of London Drug Action Teams (DATs) have already drawn up local alcohol misuse strategies, as part of their plans to tackle wider substance misuse. Officials are working with DATs and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) to ensure that all London boroughs prioritise alcohol misuse in the next round of crime and drugs strategies.

Amphetamines

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the oral answer of 22 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 551, on amphetamines, what assessment he has made of the conversion of common cold, flu and hayfever tablets into amphetamines; and what discussions he has had on the volume of these over the counter medicines sold to individuals. [164189]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 29 March 2003]*: The Forensic Science Service's data on seizures of illicit drugs shows no incidence in the United Kingdom in recent years of these over the counter medicines having been converted into amphetamines for misuse.

Criminal Records Bureau

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the Criminal Records Bureau checks addresses and criminal records in application forms. [161950]

Ms Blears: The Criminal Records Bureau scans application forms into its secure system and the address details are compared against a piece of software that identifies whether a legitimate address has been entered. Should an address not be recognised, the form is sent to members of staff who will check the details against a standard verification system known as "Post-Code Lookup". If the address details cannot be verified, the CRB sends a letter to the applicant to seek clarification.

Enhanced Disclosure Applicants are asked to provide details of their addresses, which cover the past five years. This information is used to determine which police force(s) need to be contacted to obtain details of any information held that is not on the police national computer. In such circumstances, the police will check local records to see whether information about the applicant, can be linked with any criminal activity, or any other information that might be pertinent to the position applied for.

Occasionally, an applicant may send with their application form details of any convictions they hold. These are returned to the applicant with a letter informing them that such details are not required for CRB purposes, however the applicant is required to declare such convictions to the registered body. The checks carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau will identify details of relevant convictions.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Criminal Records Bureau received the application of Helen Livett of Binstead, Isle of Wight, for a record check; when that record check will be notified to him; and what the reason is for the delay in responding. [162210]

Ms Blears: The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) received an Enhanced Disclosure Application Form in respect of Helen Livett on 28 August 2002. The CRB will not issue a disclosure as a result of this application because it has been withdrawn. In January 2003, the bureau conducted an exercise to identify the number of old applications that had been suspended, awaiting further information and Helen Livett's was identified as one such application.

The CRB wrote to Helen Livett and her Registered Body to advise that further information was required in order to process her disclosure application. These letters stated that the application would be withdrawn if this information was not received within six weeks of the date of the letters. No reply was received; consequently Helen Livett's disclosure was withdrawn on 11 April 2003.

Should Helen Livett require a disclosure, she will need to re-apply, ensuring that she provides further payment and sufficient information to enable the CRB to process it.

Curfew Orders

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many curfew orders have been made in the Ribble Valley constituency in each of the last seven years. [163829]

Ms Blears: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him on 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1669W.

Firearms

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times the Firearms Consultative Committee has met over the last 12 months. [163768]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 26 March 2003]:* The Committee met five times. In addition there were three sub-group meetings.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the reasons are for the disbandment of the Firearms Consultative Committee. [163769]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 26 March 2003]:* As my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, indicated in his written statement on 30 January, the Government are anxious to maintain a forum for consultation but wishes to do so on a broader basis than allowed by section 22 of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988 under which the Firearms Consultative Committee was established. We are now considering a new two-tier consultative structure to look at detailed technical matters and the operation of firearms controls in the round.

Forensic Science Service

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to revoke the Forensic Science Service Trading Fund Order 1998. [164185]

Ms Blears: There are no immediate plans to revoke the Order as the action is necessary only towards the very end of the process of transforming the Forensic Science Service into a public private partnership.

Khat

Ms Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 239W, to the hon. Member for Romford (Mr. Rosindell) on Khat, what practical steps the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs has taken to review the impact of Khat. [164091]

Caroline Flint: The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs keeps the situation in respect of all controlled drugs under review. At its meeting on 2 October 2003, the Advisory Council's sub-committee the Technical Committee considered the impact of Khat. The Committee concluded that further research needed to be carried out before any informed decisions could be made.

The Home Office is in the process of commissioning a piece of research into Khat use in the United Kingdom. We expect the research to be completed by the summer of 2005.

Lancashire Police

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much of the cost of policing in Lancashire was paid for by *(a)* central Government and *(b)* local council tax in each of the last four years. [157678]

Ms Blears: The information is set out in the table.

	Council tax	*Government funding and specific grant*[1]	*Other*[2]	*Total gross revenue expenditure*
2000–01	27.4	164.1	10.5	202.0
2001–02	29.9	176.7	8.1	214.7
2002–03	33.3	178.4	14.7	226.4
2003–04	39.7	189.7	9.6	239.0

[1] Includes Principal Home Office Police grant, ODPM Revenue Support Grant and National Non Domestic Rates, Special grant, Revenue for Airwave, Crime Fighting Fund, Rural Policing Grant, Loan charge grant, Street Crime Initiative grant and other specific grants.

[2] Includes all other force income apart from specific grants from Government, and movements in reserves.

Source:

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Police statistics (Actuals 2000–01 to 2002–03 and Estimates 2003–04).

Mopeds (CSOs)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many mopeds have been purchased by the Metropolitan police for use by police community support officers in each borough; and at what cost. [163333]

Ms Blears: The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis informs me that the Metropolitan police have placed orders for 180 mopeds, which are to be used by Community Support Officers.

Of these, 58 mopeds have been delivered and are currently in operational use. They are deployed primarily in the following boroughs by Community Support Officers of the Transport Operation Command Unit.

Borough	*Number of mopeds*
Lewisham	4
Lambeth	3
Tower Hamlets	8
Kensington and Chelsea	4
Camden	18
Ealing	4
Hackney	4
Westminster	13

Vehicles have been procured at competitive prices and the cost of the order remains commercially confidential.

Offender Management

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who will be responsible for the recall of prisoners who breach their parole licence under the National Offender Management Service arrangements. [161173]

Paul Goggins: The current arrangements for the recall of prisoners who breach their parole licence are unlikely to change but it will become a function within the National Offender Management Service.

Overseas Bribery

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people specialise in combating overseas bribery in *(a)* the National Criminal Intelligence Service, *(b)* the National Crime Squad and *(c)* other law enforcement agencies. [163487]

Ms Blears: The National Criminal Intelligence Service holds a responsibility to maintain a national register of reports made of suspected cases of overseas bribery, and two officers, including a senior manager, are involved in the work as part of a wider set of responsibilities they have.

In the National Crime Squad there are no officers or staff dedicated solely to combating overseas bribery. However, the coercion and corruption of law enforcement officers and public officials is characteristic of the way in which serious and organised criminals operate. Consequently, when required, significant resources are invested by the National Crime Squad in combating this threat—both in the UK and overseas.

The Solicitor-General will answer the separate question regarding the Crown Prosecution Service and the Serious Fraud Office.

Police Funding

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was provided by the Government to police authorities *(a)* from national non-domestic rates, *(b)* from revenue support grant, *(c)* from Home Office police principal grant, *(d)* from all other Home Office and other special grants excluding capital and *(e)* as capital grants were in each year since 1996–97. [148612]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* The information is set out in the table.

£ million

	(a) Redistribute of non-domestic rates[1,2]	*(b) Revenue support grant*[1,2]	*(c) Home Office police grant*	*(d) Total other grants*[3]	*(e) Capital grants*[4]
1996–97	1,061	1,485	3,349	—	190
1997–98	1,035	1,516	3,473	—	170
1998–99	1,027	1,525	3,649	—	143
1999–2000	1,106	1,541	3,698	—	147
2000–01	1,201	1,486	3,823	73	143
2001–02[5]	1,214	1,596	3,995	229	221
2002–03	1,311	1,504	4,065	349	316
2003–04	770	2,055	4,288	658	306
2004–05	744	2,222	4,380	657	281

[1] *Source:* Office of the Deputy Prime Minister & National Assembly for Wales.
[2] Revenue Support Grant (RSG) includes SSA Reduction Grant and Central Support Protection grant. RSG and NNDR for the City of London Police is provided in respect of ail its functions.
[3] Specific grants since 2000–01 for targeted programmes.
[4] Capital Grants include Home Office police capital grant, supplementary credit approvals, Air Support and Premises Improvement Fund, Airwave capital and C3i. Totals up to 2001–02 include an element for major capital schemes allocated under the Priority Planning List (PPL) scheme.
[5] The grant figures for 2001–02 and 2002–03 are not directly comparable, owing to changes from 2002–03 in the method of funding the National Crime Squad and the National Criminal Intelligence Service.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to ensure Chorley receives police funding which reflects population growth there. [161608]

Ms Blears: General grant funding for police authorities is allocated on the basis of an estimate of relative need for police resources, taking into account local resources. Resident population is the most significant single factor in the estimate of need. The latest population estimates available from the Registrar General are used.

The Chief Constable and the Police Authority allocate resources at force level according to local plans and operational priorities.

Lancashire Police Authority's grant in 2004–05 will be £182.9 million, an increase of £5.8 million or 3.25 per cent. over this year. It will also receive over £17 million for targeted programmes and capital provision.

I understand from the Chief Constable that Lancashire Constabulary have embarked on a significant community engagement programme. Additional community beat officers have been put in place across the constabulary over the last 12 months, including in Chorley. The constabulary plans to deploy an additional 15 officers to the Southern Division over the next 12 months, who will be split equally across each of the three borough areas. In addition, community support officers are in place. The constabulary has recently launched the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme to improve the quality of service to local communities.

Police Officers

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the training costs were *(a)* per officer and *(b)* in total for new police officers in (i) the East Midlands and (ii) West Derbyshire in each year since 1997. [163739]

Ms Blears: Information concerning the training costs *(a)* per officer and *(b)* in total for new police officers in (i) the East Midlands and (ii) West Derbyshire in each year since 1997 is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers were recruited in *(a)* the East Midlands and *(b)* West Derbyshire in each year since 1997; and what percentage of each year's intake remains as serving officers, in each case. [163741]

Ms Blears: Information on probationer wastage is not available. Data are in the form of police constables recruitment and wastage for the East Midlands Government Office Region and Derbyshire Police Force Area. Wastage comprises retirements, resignations, dismissals, deaths and transfers to police forces outside England and Wales. Wastage in a particular year does not necessarily relate to recruitment in that year.

The available information is given in the table.

Police constables

Number

	East Midlands[1]	*Derbyshire Police*
1997		
Recruitment	508	85
Wastage	243	47
1998		
Recruitment	402	66
Wastage	288	65
1999		
Recruitment	193	50
Wastage	283	41
2000		
Recruitment	302	79
Wastage	201	31

Police constables

Number

	East Midlands[1]	*Derbyshire Police*
2001		
Recruitment	556	103
Wastage	233	51
2002		
Recruitment	630	111
Wastage	280	39
2003		
Joiners[2]	825	264
Leavers[3]	346	74

[1] East Midlands comprises Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire Police Force Areas.

[2] Not comparable to previous recruitment figures as data include transfers from other England and Wales forces and officers returning after a period of secondment.

[3] Not comparable to previous wastage figures as data do not include transfers to other England and Wales forces and officers leaving after a period of secondment.

Sentencing Statistics

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons were sentenced in England and Wales for motoring offences, excluding those causing death or serious injury, in each of the last 10 years; how many of those received a custodial sentence; and what the average custodial sentence length was. [163242]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is contained in the table and gives the number of offenders sentenced, those sentenced to immediate custody, the custody rate and the average custodial sentence length at all courts for motoring offences, other than those causing death or injury, England and Wales 1993 to 2002.

Number of offenders sentenced[1]*, sentenced to immediate custody, the custody rate and average custodial sentence length for motoring offences*[2] *at all courts*

England and Wales 1993 to 2002	*Total offenders sentenced*	*Sentenced to immediate custody*[3]	*Custody rate*[4] *(percentage)*	*Average custodial sentence length (months)*
1993	675,868	9,280	1	3.7
1994	650,979	13,116	2	3.7
1995	653,671	14,766	2	3.7
1996	658,991	14,598	2	3.8
1997	658,822	15,967	2	3.8
1998	674,194	16,006	2	3.7
1999	641,160	17,412	3	3.8
2000	615,233	17,832	3	3.8
2001	591,220	18,867	3	3.9
2002	604,289	19,139	3	4.0

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Excludes offences involving death or injury, theft and unauthorised taking of motor vehicle and non-payment of vehicle excise licence.

[3] Includes unsuspended imprisonment, secure training orders, S91–92 of the Powers of the Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 (replaced Section 53 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933), partly suspended sentences, detention in a young offender institution and detention and training orders.

[4] Proportion of offenders sentenced who were sentenced to immediate custody.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

Shopkeepers (Harassment)

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many shop workers in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* England and Wales made formal complaints of harassment and violence in (i) 1997, (ii) 2001 and (iii) 2004 to date. [163603]

Ms Blears: This information is not collected centrally.

TREASURY

Bushmeat

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he is taking to control the import of bushmeat. [164495]

John Healey: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Selby (Mr. Grogan) on 29 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1232W.

Civil Service

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost savings arising from the reduction of 40,500 Civil Service jobs in *(a)* each of the years between now and 2008 and *(b)* the following five years; and if he will make a statement. [163855]

Mr. Boateng: The Budget announced that the Department for Work and Pensions has put forward plans to reduce its total staffing by 30,000 between now and 2008. These staff reductions will achieve a total gross administration saving of around £600 million a year in 2003–04 prices.

The Budget also announced the integration of HM Customs and Excise and the Inland Revenue. The creation of a single revenue department, along with existing plans and proposed efficiency reforms, will create scope for an overall staff reduction equivalent to 10,500 posts by 2008. The location and nature of staffing changes will be determined in detailed business planning to be undertaken by the revenue departments and their new Executive Chairman, when appointed, who will be consulting as appropriate with all key stakeholders including trade unions.

Gift Aid

John Barrett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what steps his Department is taking to make heritage and conservation charities aware of his plans to amend Gift Aid rules on day memberships; [164472]

(2) if he will postpone his plans to amend Gift Aid rules on day memberships to allow heritage and conservation charities to make appropriate amendments to their financial and other plans; [164473]

(3) what deadlines have been set for the proposed consultation on his plans to amend Gift Aid rules on day memberships; [164474]

(4) which organisations his Department intends to consult over plans to amend Gift Aid rules on day memberships; [164475]

(5) what estimate he has made of the number of heritage and conservation charities that will be affected by his Department's proposals to amend gift aid rules on day memberships; [164476]

(6) if he will estimate the additional Treasury revenue that would be raised in each of the next three years from his Department's proposed amendment to Gift Aid rules on day memberships. [164477]

John Healey: The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in this year's Budget that the Government will continue to consult with charities to develop a new definition of the special statutory exemption from the Gift Aid rules for heritage and conservation charities.

The Inland Revenue has since written to all charities and representative bodies who participated in the first stages of consultation following last year's pre-Budget report. A copy of this letter has also been posted on the Inland Revenue website. Charities have until 11 June to contribute to this extended consultation.

The Government aim to announce the results of the consultation around the time of the Spending Review giving charities the opportunity to take account of the changes in their financial planning.

It is not possible to establish the number of charities that might be affected by, nor the revenue effect of, any changes which might be proposed following this consultation since charities are not required to differentiate on their Gift Aid claims the amounts they are claiming for 'day membership' income from other amounts they are claiming. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Leominster (Mr. Wiggin) on 15 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 865–66W.

Government Debt

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of servicing total Government debt was in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [163858]

Mr. Boateng: The latest available figures for debt interest are published by the Office for National Statistics in Table 1.1C of Financial Statistics. A copy of this table has been placed in the Library of the House.

Government Revenue Deficit

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost of servicing the Government revenue deficit in financial year 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [163857]

Mr. Boateng: The latest available estimate of debt interest is in Table C11 on page 266 of Budget 2004 (HC 301).

Head Teachers

Lady Hermon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his commitment in the Budget in relation to direct payment of *(a)* £55,000 to primary school and *(b)* £180,000 to secondary school headteachers includes Northern Ireland. [164387]

Ruth Kelly: The Budget announcement related to schools in England only. Funding in Northern Ireland is a matter for the Northern Ireland Executive.

Income Tax

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much income tax was collected from each income tax bracket in the last fiscal year for which figures are available. [162466]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to table 2.6 "Income tax liabilities, by taxpayer's marginal rate" on the Inland Revenue website www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/income_taxAable-26.pdf.

Public Sector Employees

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many employees there were in the public sector in each year since 1995. [163879]

Mr. Boateng: The information requested is published in Labour Market Trends, a copy of which is available in the Library and which can also be accessed through the Office for National Statistics' website: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme labour/LMT september03.pdf

Public Sector Relocation

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which Government Departments suggested York to Sir Michael Lyons' review of public sector relocation as a possible place for relocating their staff; and which groups of staff were mentioned in this context. [163802]

Mr. Boateng: Sir Michael Lyons' review was carried out on the basis that Government Departments who identified possible locations for dispersal of activity should not be named until such time as their plans have been fully worked up and they are ready to make an announcement.

Spirits Tax

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the tax stamps schemes for bottles of spirits *(a)* run by the United States Administration prior to 1985 and *(b)* proposed by the Norwegian Government in 1997. [164497]

John Healey: Tax stamps have been introduced in forty different countries for a variety of reasons ranging from quality assurance to tackling fraud. The wide range of different schemes and reasons for their introduction or withdrawal means that comparisons between countries cannot easily be drawn.

The USA withdrew its federal tax stamps in 1985 when a 1954 law governing marks on spirits was repealed. However, some States within the USA continued to use tax stamps for a number of reasons including the collection of state duties.

Norway passed enabling legislation for tax stamps in 1997 but has not yet introduced stamps, so it is difficult to make any meaningful assessment of its proposed scheme.

We have received information from over 20 countries about the operation of their tax stamps schemes. Of eight European Union and accession countries where direct inquiries have been made, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Poland and the Czech Republic have no plans to withdraw their schemes. Poland in particular emphasised the anti-fraud benefits of their scheme.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will estimate the impact of the introduction of strip stamps upon the competitiveness of UK distillers, with particular reference to the Scotch whisky sector; [161642]

(2) what estimate he has made of the effect on the cost of packaging for UK distillers of the introduction of strip stamps; and what estimate he has made of a consequent impact upon consumer prices; [161643]

(3) what estimate he has made of the impact of the introduction of strip stamps upon the efficiency of the UK distilling sector, with particular reference to Scotch whisky distillers; [161644]

(4) how many strip stamps he estimates UK distillers will need to purchase each year; and if he will estimate the impact of this cost upon *(a)* employment and *(b)* profitability in the UK; [161645]

(5) how many jobs he expects to be *(a)* eliminated and *(b)* created by the introduction of strip stamps; and what estimate he has made of possible impact upon consumer prices. [161646]

John Healey: The Government announced in the Budget that, owing to continued high levels of spirits duty fraud, it would legislate to implement the Roques report recommendation to introduce tax stamps for spirits. In doing so, the Government will help the trade financially with compliance costs by deferring payment for tax stamps, assisting firms with capital investment and freezing spirits duty for the remainder of this Parliament. Further announcements will be made once detailed options have been considered in discussion with the trade.

A regulatory impact assessment, to be published alongside the Finance Bill, will set out the anticipated impacts, costs and benefits of the tax stamp regime. The impacts on compliance costs, competitiveness, employment and consumer prices will all depend on the detailed measures taken to implement tax stamps, on the measures the Government will introduce to offset the impact on legitimate business and on business decisions taken by companies involved in the spirits production and supply industry.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what discussions have taken place with the spirits industry about introducing tax stamps; and when he expects to publish full details and costs of the proposals for tax stamps; [164824]

(2) what the reasons are for the delay in publishing details and costs of the proposed tax stamps since his original proposal. [164825]

John Healey: There has been extensive consultation with the spirits industry since December 2001 when a formal consultation on tax stamps issues was launched. Following the Chancellor's announcement in last year's Pre-Budget Report (Cm 6042) that he would implement at the Budget the Roques report recommendation of tax stamps for products subject to the spirits rate of duty when an equally effective alternative could be found, Ministers and officials have received a wide range of representations and held more than 40 meetings with industry representatives. These discussions are continuing and joint industry Government working groups have been established to progress the implementation of tax stamps.

It is the Government's intention to publish a full Regulatory Impact Assessment alongside this year's Finance Bill on 8 April.

Tax Collection

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of tax collection was in each of the last five financial years for which figures are available. [162454]

Dawn Primarolo: For years up to and including 2001–02, details of the duties collected by the Department and the associated costs of administering those duties can be found in Table 1 at Appendix 1 of the Inland Revenue Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2002 (published in December 2002).

For 2002–03, comparative figures are:

	£ million
Net receipt of Inland Revenue duties	219,194.8
Total cost of administering Inland Revenue duties	2,431.9

Tax Receipts

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money the Government received from *(a)* VAT, *(b)* income tax, *(c)* inheritance tax, *(d)* corporation tax, *(e)* capital gains tax and *(f)* stamp duty in each of the last five financial years for which figures are available. [162453]

Dawn Primarolo: Receipts from VAT are published on the HM Customs and Excise website, www.hmce.gov.uk/about/reports/ann-report-2003/a1.pdf.

Income tax, inheritance tax, corporation tax, capital gains tax and stamp duty receipts are published on the Inland Revenue website, www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/tax_receipts/table-12.pdf.

Trusts (Income Tax)

Mr. Flook: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what discussions he has had with the trust sector regarding the effect of income tax on pre-owned assets on trusts set up before December 2003; [164561]

(2) what assessment he has made of the ease with which tax avoidance schemes using trusts can be dismantled. [164781]

Dawn Primarolo: The consultation process on pre-owned assets was open to all interested parties, and the Chancellor took account of all responses received when settling the details announced in his Budget. How readily any particular tax avoidance scheme using trusts can be dismantled will depend on the scheme; in the case of schemes involving pre-owned assets the Chancellor concluded, with the benefit of consultation, that dismantling them would often be difficult. Provision to address this is among the matters covered by his Budget announcements.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

ACAS

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost is of production of hard copy leaflets issued by ACAS that cover employment rights. [164157]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I refer the hon. Member to my reply given on 15 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 63–64W.

Advice Booklets

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1676W, on advice booklets, which of the organisations invited to be part of the practitioner group *(a)* accepted the invitation to form part of the group and *(b)* supported the policy to cease production of hard copy prints of the relevant leaflets. [164228]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Lynne Jones) on 25 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 962–93W.

The group were asked for their views on reducing the number of publications in hard copy. No one at the meeting opposed the proposed changes.

Arms Exports

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many open individual export licences for arms components have been granted to *(a)* Côte d'Ivoire, *(b)* Nigeria, *(c)* Senegal, *(d)* Colombia, *(e)* Angola and *(f)* Namibia in each year since 2002 broken down by (i) type, (ii) volume and (iii) value; and under what conditions each licence was granted. [163414]

Nigel Griffiths: Since May 1997, the Government have published an Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls containing details of all goods, including components, authorised for export from the UK and to which destinations. The total value of SIEL licences issued for each destination is recorded in these reports. Copies of the Annual Report (up to and including 2002) are available from the Libraries of the House. Details of export licences approved in 2003 will be published later this year in the 2003 Annual Report.

Concerning quantities exported, HM Customs and Excise and DTI compliance officers check that the terms of the licence have been respected but do not store data on volumes of actual exports which have been vetted and licensed.

All licensing decisions are only made following careful and rigorous scrutiny of applications against the consolidated EU and national arms export licensing criteria, taking account of circumstances prevailing at the time and other announced Government policies.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what weapons components have been licensed to *(a)* Brazil, *(b)* Jordan, *(c)* Malaysia, *(d)* Singapore, *(e)* Turkey, *(f)* South Korea and *(g)* South Africa in the last two years; and what quantities each of those countries has received. [163416]

Nigel Griffiths: Since May 1997, the Government have published an Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls containing details of all goods, including components, authorised for export from the UK and to which destinations. The total value of SIEL licences issued for each destination is recorded in these reports. Copies of the Annual Report (up to and including 2002) are available from the Libraries of the House. Details of export licences approved in 2003 will be published later this year in the 2003 Annual Report.

Concerning quantities exported, HM Customs and Excise and DTI compliance officers check that the terms of the licence have been respected but do not store data on volumes of actual exports which have been vetted and licensed.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether her Department has binding agreements in place to prevent the re-export of UK components without the prior knowledge of the UK Government. [163850]

Nigel Griffiths: When considering an application for a licence to export strategic goods, the DTI requires the applicant to forward an undertaking from the end-user of the goods that they are for his ultimate end-use. A risk assessment is then made, taking account of any information we may hold on the end-user and the risk of diversion. I am advised it would not be practicable for the Government or another party to enter into binding agreements with end-users who are outside UK jurisdiction.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many countries since the introduction in July 2002 of revised guidelines for the licensing of arms components in incorporation cases she estimates have received export licences for arms components where the licensee may not be the final end-user of the finished goods. [163851]

Nigel Griffiths: For 2003, information on whether UK licensed goods were for incorporation has been recorded on the DTI Export Control Organisation's (ECO) databases. Information prior to this can be obtained only at disproportionate cost, via a manual search of licensing files. Statistics on incorporation cases will be published in the Government's 2003 Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls later this year.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what definition her Department uses of a non-aggressive component. [163852]

Nigel Griffiths: The DTI has no definition of a non-aggressive component. All components which are on the UK Military List or EU Dual-Use Regulation require an export licence before they may be exported.

Broadband

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to extend *(a)* broadband access to the internet and *(b)* digital television to all rural areas of the UK. [164221]

Mr. Timms: The DTI is working with the devolved Administrations and regional development agencies to extend the availability of broadband still further with a view to broadband being available in every community by the end of next year. We have given them £30 million for pilot schemes to extend the availability of broadband in areas not currently served by the market. This has helped to stimulate further regional schemes across the UK worth at least £377 million over 2000–06.

In England, the Broadband Aggregation Project will make sure that the £1 billion Government spend on broadband connectivity for the public sector between 2003 and 2006 will offer the best value for money and widen availability to surrounding communities.

A joint DTI/Defra rural broadband team has been set up specifically to address the issue of availability of broadband in rural areas. It aims to support local community action to secure affordable access to broadband, to ensure rural communities derive the maximum benefit from the deployment of broadband and promote rural access and take up of broadband to those in a position to effect positive change.

With regard to digital TV, we said in 1999 that before we switch off analogue transmissions everyone who could receive the main public service broadcasting channels in analogue form must be able to receive them on digital systems, and that switching must be affordable for the vast majority of people. These criteria still hold true. However, the Government consider that the advantages of digital television are such that the question is not whether, but how and when we should switch off analogue transmissions.

One of the main arguments for switching off analogue transmissions is that until we do so around 25 per cent. of households will not be able to receive digital services through an aerial. This is because if the power of digital transmissions were increased to enable more complete coverage this would interfere with analogue transmissions, thereby degrading the quality of analogue television reception. Full digital coverage therefore depends on switching off the analogue signal. We are currently working with broadcasters and other stakeholders (including consumer groups) under the Digital Television Action Plan (available at www.digitaltelevision.gov.uk) on an analogue to digital switchover implementation plan. One of the deliverables under this plan will be a region by region timetable for switchover.

Many rural areas are already able to receive digital television signals. Whether a particular household can receive them depends on whether that household is in the reception area of one of the 80 main transmitters from which digital signals are currently broadcast, not on whether it is in a rural or urban area. Digital terrestrial television reception can be checked by entering the viewer's postcode on either the Freeview or the Digital Television Group (DTG)'s websites www.freeview.co.uk or www.dtg.org.uk. Additionally, retailers are advised to check whether customers can receive digital terrestrial television where they live before buying, and most retailers normally bring this to the customer's attention at the point of sale.

It is already possible to receive digital television services by satellite in the vast majority of rural areas. Satellite broadcasts are available to over 98 per cent. of households in the United Kingdom. Viewers can choose to receive all the BBC services and many others free-to-view by purchasing a satellite dish. Alternatively they can subscribe for packages of services which include all public broadcasting services.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what targets the Government have set for the development of broadband by 2010. [164264]

Mr. Timms: The Government's current broadband target is to have the most competitive and extensive broadband market in the G7 countries by the end of 2005. The Government are in the process of considering with stakeholders (including the Broadband Stakeholder Group), on what targets are necessary to measure the UK's progress in this area after this date. This process will be completed during this year and the Government will make an announcement once the review is complete.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on Government plans to widen access to broadband over the next 12 months. [164285]

Mr. Timms: In November 2003, the DTI called on the Government, public bodies and broadband providers to bring broadband availability to 100 per cent. of communities across the UK by the end of 2005. BT and other stakeholders in the telecommunications industry came forward to support this target.

The Government expect that considerable progress will be achieved within the next 12 months. According to Ofcom, an estimated 85 per cent. of UK homes and businesses are covered by a mass-market broadband solution and this is almost certain to rise to 90 per cent. this year.

The Government welcome the advice of the Broadband Stakeholder Group in helping to develop a strategy for reaching the last 10 per cent. of communities. This will involve continuing action by the public and private sectors working in partnership to complete the access to an extensive and competitive broadband market throughout the UK using a variety of technologies.

Decisions on where and when networks will be deployed will be predominantly for the market. However, the Government will continue to play their part, for example, by aggregating the £1 billion demand for public

sector connectivity to 2006 through the Broadband Aggregation Programme, helping to ensure that this investment extends broadband availability to local communities.

Business Link

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the performance of Business Link. [163322]

Nigel Griffiths: The performance of BL continues to grow strongly. More customers are using BL services then ever before—330,000 businesses last year and at the same time, they are becoming increasingly satisfied—with the quality of the services they are receiving.

The latest performance results (up to the end of Quarter 3 of 2003–04) show that market penetration has already reached the full year target of 27 per cent—with more than double the number of businesses helped this year compared to the same point two years ago and customer satisfaction is still rising and now stands at 87 per cent.

Consumer and Investor Protection

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will break down how the funding for *(a)* miscellaneous consumer protection and *(b)* investor protection listed in her Departmental Report 2003 was allocated in 2003–04; and what amounts were allocated in each year since 1997. [147812]

Mr. Sutcliffe: A number of items are included under "Miscellaneous Consumer Protection" including:

£ million

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Consumer Safety (inc. grant-in-aid for ROSPA)	3.4	1.0
Economic Consumer Protection	1.1	4.2
Consumer Information	2.1	2.4
Modernisation Fund[1]	6.6	6.3

[1] The Modernisation Fund is intended to improve the capability and effectiveness of the trading standards service in consumer protection enforcement.

Similarly investor protection covers several items, including:

£ million

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Costs: Disqualification of Directors	13.0	16.9
Companies house late filing penalties	2.4	2.4
Financial Reporting Council	0.8	1.1
Repayments to Treasury solicitors[1]	1.4	1.7
S447 inquiries by outside investigators	1.1	1.1

[1] Payments for professional services in connection with company investigations, including the costs of hiring counsel.

Unfortunately changes in the DTI's accounting system, and changes in responsibility within the Department make it impossible, except at disproportionate cost, to give a consistent breakdown of figures on this basis back to 1997. However drawing on figures from past DTI Expenditure Plans Reports, the sums allocated to these areas since 1997 are:

£ million

	Miscellaneous consumer protection	*Investor protection*
1997–98	8.0	17.4
1998–99	3.2	21.6
1999–2000	3.2	19.3
2000–01	10.7	22.1
2001–02	11.8	23.0
2002–03	17.1	23.0
2003–04	15.0	23.2

Equal Pay Reviews

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many employers, and in which sectors, have conducted equal pay reviews in each year for which figures are available. [163542]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Research published by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) in 2003 has found that 36 per cent. of large organisations (500 or more employees) in their main survey had either conducted an equal pay review (EPR), were in the process of conducting one, or were planning to do so before the end of 2003. 27 per cent. of medium-sized organisations (100–499 employees) had conducted, were conducting, or were planning to conduct an EPR by the end of 2003.

There is no information available on which sectors have conducted equal pay reviews, nor is there information available on organisations conducting pay reviews prior to 2003. However, the EOC survey found that in the manufacturing sector 57 per cent. of organisations had an equal pay policy, in the private services sector 54 per cent. had a policy and in the public sector 69 per cent. had an equal pay policy.

Government Procurement

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to ensure that procurement by the Government supports innovation within UK manufacturing. [163568]

Ms Hewitt: This Government are committed to British manufacturing and helping manufacturers in Britain to compete successfully for public contracts.

That is why the my right hon. Friend Prime Minister has asked me to chair a cross-government ministerial team to deliver the agenda set out in the Government's Innovation Report, building on work to identify areas where public procurement can better facilitate innovation and how this can be achieved, particularly through developing guidance for public procurers on how to procure innovative solutions and working with NHS Estates to draw innovation through the supply chain.

This is also why in October 2002 this Government launched their Defence Industrial Policy, which commits us to become more innovative in the awarding of major defence contracts and which was the context for the decision to award the contract for Hawk.

Interest Rate Controls

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she expects the research on the way interest ceilings work in other EU countries will be completed. [164656]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We expect to complete and publish in late spring 2004 research into the way that interest rate controls have worked in other countries.

Job References

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what requirements are in place to ensure that job references provided by employers are accurate and not misleading; what assessment she has made of the adequacy of remedies for those who may be a victim of an inaccurate reference and may be temporarily unemployed as a consequence, with particular reference to the cost of obtaining a remedy; and if she will make a statement. [164083]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Employees can take action in the employment tribunals if they consider that a reference discriminates against them unlawfully, for instance on grounds of sex or sexual orientation. Employers also have a common law duty to take reasonable care in supplying references. An employee provided with a misleading or inaccurate reference could consider taking action in the civil courts against its supplier. The Department has made no specific assessment of the potential cost involved in seeking redress for a misleading reference or the remedies available.

National Minimum Wage

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of low paid workers who will directly benefit from the increase in the minimum wage in *(a)* the constituency of Ogmore, *(b)* Bridgend county borough and *(c)* Wales. [164554]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is not possible to provide estimates specifically for the constituency of Ogmore or Bridgend county borough. Based on the Office for National Statistics' Low Pay data released in 2003, the DTI estimates that between 90,000 and 110,000 people in Wales stand to benefit directly from the October 2004 uprating of the National Minimum Wage (that was recently announced).

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will take steps to ensure that the next generation of PIN pads introduced into post offices will be fully accessible for disabled people, with particular reference to those with sight problems. [163643]

Mr. Timms: The design and operation of the Post Office card account, including the use of PIN pads, is a commercial matter for Post Office Ltd. I can confirm, however, that the Post Office is working to ensure its services are as accessible to as many customers as possible. To this end it has already made improvements to its PIN pads. It has: (i) developed a key guard for the PIN pad which clips over the unused keys to simplify its appearance and help guide customers; and (ii) added a raised dot to the "5" key. Further improvements are planned including: (i) producing a guide with RNIB to enhance the enter, clear and cancel keys by inserting tactile symbols next to each of these keys; (ii) different beeps for the enter, clear and cancel keys; and (iii) large print, tactile maps and audio guides to be available in post offices to assist customers to use PIN pads. The Post Office is in consultation with the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and other representative groups about these adjustments.

Small Businesses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government have taken to help small businesses in Crosby since 1997. [160582]

Nigel Griffiths: In his Budget statement the Chancellor announced a number of steps to help small businesses including an increase of capital allowances to 50 per cent. and raising VAT registration threshold to 58 per cent., all of which helps Small Businesses in Crosby. In addition since 2001 the Business Link Operator for Greater Merseyside has contributed £13,700 consultancy subsidy to help 126 businesses, which includes three organisations who have shown an interest in improving their business through developing their people. Two of these are now preparing towards obtaining the Investors in People standard.

A number of organisations have taken advantage of Business Link for Merseyside's subsidised consulting programme under Objective One, one of which wished to establish a scenic/prop workshop for the film and media industry, the subsidy helped the organisation draw up a business plan and raise the finance to develop their business idea. A day Nursery who have expanded into new premises were helped by using this subsidy to help promote their new premises by a production of a new brochure. Two financial service companies have benefited, one by using the subsidy to develop their website to promote financial services, the other to obtain a network solution to provide more efficient and effective ICT services within the business. Another Merseyside company is looking to expand their business and will use the subsidy to develop a marketing plan.

One organisation has used the Business Link's Supply Chain Programme and has just signed up for a second year, part of the programme puts interested businesses on a database and matches them up with purchasers further up the supply chain, this gives the business greater opportunity to grow.

The Business Link has assisted a number of businesses to start-up, this includes helping to draw up a plan to restart a business following pregnancy of the owner, helping identify and obtain funding to allow an employee of a small business to buy out from the retiring employer, assisting a new business to access growth finance, providing an action plan to a business wishing to recycle computers to charities.

A company, started with a loan from Princes Trust approached the Euro Info Centre North West (hosted by Greater Merseyside Enterprise) for information on further European funding to develop the business into Europe. This has given the business access to further

funding which should help it grow into Europe. Another Business has taken advantage several times of the UKTI trade mission service to develop its overseas market opportunities.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people were employed in small businesses in each of the last seven years. [163313]

Nigel Griffiths: The figure for 2003 is not yet available.

The estimated numbers of people employed in small businesses (businesses with 0 to 49 employees) in the United Kingdom private sector (including public corporations and nationalised bodies) from 1997 to 2002 are as follows:

	People (Thousand)
1997	9,418
1998	9,652
1999	9,557
2000	9,650
2001	9,809
2002	9,911

These figures are available at www.sbs.gov.uk/statistics/smestats.php.

State Aid

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many requests to the European Commission concerning state aid compliance in the regions of *(a)* the north west, *(b)* the north east and *(c)* Yorkshire and the Humber have been made since 2000; and how many requests have been turned down. [163708]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The following figures set out the best available information on the number of notifications in the regions of the north west, north east and Yorkshire and the Humber made to the European Commission since 2000, excluding agriculture, fishery and transport cases.

North West:

Three SME block exemption, three training aid block exemption and one notified scheme using the full notification procedure—Aid N282/2003 Cumbria Broadband—Project Access—Advancing Communication for Cumbria and Enabling Sustainable Services

North East:

11 SME block exemption, four training aid block exemption and no notified schemes

Yorkshire and Humber:

Four SME block exemption, two training aid block exemption and one notified scheme using the full notification procedure—Aid N486/2003—Yorkshire and Humber Research and Development scheme.

The European Commission has approved all of these schemes.

Taxi Licences

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the cost to local authorities of reviewing local taxi licence restrictions. [164058]

Mr. Darling: I have been asked to reply.

There should be no significant additional cost involved in the procedure outlined in the Government's Action Plan. Any local licensing authority which currently controls taxi numbers must base their policy on an assessment of local demand. Our proposals simply aim to formalise that process.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria the Government are setting for the assessment for local taxi licences' restrictions. [164060]

Mr. Darling: I have been asked to reply.

We are asking those local licensing authorities which currently control taxi numbers to review their policies to determine whether such policies are in the best interests of passengers. As stated in the Action Plan, our request to the licensing authorities will include guidelines on quantity restrictions, including a review of the level of service available to consumers and consumer choice. The guidelines will cover (i) effective surveys to measure demand, including latent demand, for taxi services; (ii) consultation with all those working in the market, consumer and passenger (including disabled) groups, groups which represent those passengers with special needs, the police, a wide range of transport stakeholders e.g. rail/bus/coach providers and traffic managers; and (iii) publication of conclusions, including an explanation of the particular local circumstances which justify restrictions, what benefits they deliver to consumers and how decisions on numbers have been reached. Authorities will be encouraged to make all the evidence gathered to support the decision-making process available for public scrutiny.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consultations her Department will undertake with *(a)* the taxi trade and *(b)* local authorities prior to issuing guidelines to local authorities on taxi licence restrictions and the service available to consumers. [164061]

Mr. Darling: I have been asked to reply.

We shall consult a range of stakeholders, including both the taxi trade and licensing authorities, on the draft best practice guidance which we intend to publish later this year.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what measures will be available to her Department to intervene in local authorities' decisions on taxi licence restrictions; [164062]

(2) what role her Department will play in the assessment of local conditions for taxi licence restrictions. [164063]

Mr. Darling: I have been asked to reply.

As stated in the Action Plan, we shall be asking those local licensing authorities which currently impose a numerical limit on taxi licences to justify their policy and to publish that justification every three years and in the Local Transport Plans which cover their area. We shall note what the local authorities tell us in order that we can consider if further action is needed when we carry out a review in three years' time.

Trade (Taiwan and China)

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on recent levels and trends in UK trade with *(a)* Taiwan and *(b)* China. [164032]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The value of UK trade in goods, with Taiwan and China is given in the following table.

UK trade with Taiwan, in the latest three months, was 2.5 per cent. lower than the same period a year earlier. Trade with China increased by 31.4 per cent. over the same period.

UK trade in goods with Taiwan and China

£ million

	Taiwan	*China*
2002		
November	261	740
December	264	694
2003		
January	263	719
February	253	751
March	250	779
April	262	848
May	254	856
June	241	841
July	255	777
August	255	888
September	258	879
October	264	929
November	257	922
December	257	987
2004		
January	254	919

[1] Seasonally adjusted.

Source:
Business Monitor MM24, Monthly Review of External Trade Statistics, ONS.

Trade Agreements

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how the Government will follow up their recent submission to the European Commission on reforming the rules of origin for preferential trade agreements. [164759]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government are following up their submission in response to the European Commission's Green Paper on the future of rules of origin in preferential trade arrangements through discussions with officials in a range of European Commission Directorates General (Trade Internal Market, Development and Enterprise) and by briefing Commissioners' cabinets ahead of an expected College of Commission discussion. We are also liaising closely with other member states that share our views.

Tyres (Recycling)

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she *(a)* has introduced and *(b)* plans to introduce to encourage the recycling of tyres for (i) road fill material and (ii) other purposes. [164306]

Mr. Timms: The Government have supported research into a wide variety of uses for waste tyres, including their use in roads. A number of trial stretches of roads incorporating rubber crumb from waste tyres have been laid for evaluation purposes. Funding support for relevant projects, through programmes such as that run by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, continues to be available.

The Government have no plans to introduce material-specific measures for tyres, although they are considering whether the general framework under which waste tyres are disposed of and recovered could be usefully strengthened. Against that background, initial estimates indicate that value was recovered from around 80 per cent. of the over 400,000 tonnes of tyres disposed of in 2003, and further progress is anticipated during 2004.

Utilities

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how much she estimates is held by utility companies in excess from estimated bills; [164630]

(2) what steps she has taken to ensure the accuracy of estimated utility bills; and if she will make a statement. [164641]

Mr. Timms: The regulation of gas and electricity supply, including billing arrangements, is the responsibility of the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem). I understand that the Chairman of Ofgem will write to the hon. Member about the matters he has raised.

VAT Registration

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the reasons for *(a)* the fall in the number of VAT registrations and *(b)* the increase in the number of VAT de-registrations since 1997. [162689]

Nigel Griffiths: VAT registrations and de-registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has been rising in each year since 1997. Similarly, businesses that de-register will not necessarily have closed. Only 1.8 million out of 3.8 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2002.

Barclays Bank's latest survey of business creation includes non-VAT registered firms and shows that there were 93,100 business start ups in England and Wales in the third quarter of 2003. The latest yearly figures show 384,900 business start ups in England and Wales in the 12 months ending in September 2003. This represents a 3 per cent. increase on the year before.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimates her Department has made of the cost to *(a)* consumers, *(b)* taxpayers and *(c)* local councils of implementing the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. [163885]

Mr. Timms: The Government's proposals for implementation of the EU Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment should result in no new burdens on taxpayers or local councils. The Directive is a producer responsibility measure and it will be a matter for producers and retailers whether they pass any new costs through to

consumers. A Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment of the Government's implementation strategy was published with their consultation paper on implementation plans for the Directive on 26 November. A copy of this has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Wind Farms

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money is being spent in 2003–04 from the Government subsidy to electricity generation companies on the construction and operation of wind farms. [164086]

Mr. Timms: In financial year 2003–04, the Government spent £5 million to support one offshore wind farm development. No direct support was provided for onshore wind farm development except for some small household or community installations under the Clear Skies scheme.

Support provided through the Non Fossil Fuel Obligation and the Renewables Obligation are not Government subsidies.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list each *(a)* existing and *(b)* proposed onshore wind farm, broken down by constituency. [164647]

Mr. Timms: Proposals to construct and operate on-shore generating stations with a capacity greater than 50 megawatts (MW) in England and Wales require my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989.

The information for applications made under section 36 for proposed on-shore wind farms is as follows:

Approved but not yet constructed

Cefn Croes— Ceredigion (consented May 2002)

Still under consideration

Little Cheyne Court—Folkestone and Hythe

Scout Moor—Heywood and Middleton, Rossendale and Darwen

Whinash—Penrith and The Border

Keadby—Brigg and Goole, Doncaster North

Tween Bridge—Doncaster North, Don Valley

Consents for generating stations in Scotland are a matter for the devolved administration. Central Government do not hold records of proposals for on-shore wind farms below 50MW as these fall to be determined by the local planning authority under the normal planning regime.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money the Government have spent on publicising the role of wind farms in each year since 1997. [164087]

Mr. Timms: The DTI's Renewable Energy Programme publishes a quarterly newsletter, New Review. The publication contains information on technical developments, business opportunities and other issues affecting all the renewables industry not just wind. The newsletter has several thousand subscribers from a range of backgrounds, including the renewables industry, Government, education, finance and consultancy. Since 1997 the average cost per annum has been in the region of £100,000.

The Government recently announced a new campaign to raise awareness of the renewable energy sector not just wind. The campaign—"It's Only Natural"—will seek to inform planners, investors and the wider community of the potential and benefits of renewable energy not just wind. The £2 million (spend over 18 months) campaign will target planners and investors through a number of channels, including workshops, a conference, media initiatives and a website.

Work-Life Balance Challenge Fund

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what resources, in addition to the Department's work-life balance fund, she makes available to help employers with work-life issues; [163483]

(2) how many employers, broken down by *(a)* sector and *(b)* region, the Department's work-life balance fund has helped in each year. [163485]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The following table sets out the number of employers who received financial assistance through the Challenge Fund over the five rounds of its operation, by region and by sector.

Figure 1

	Rounds 1–5
Breakdown by region	
North West	52
North East	33
West Midlands	27
East Midlands	45
South West	54
South East	37
Yorkshire and Humber	38
East	38
Scotland	35
Wales	—
Northern Ireland	—
London	83
Cross regional projects	15
Breakdown by Sector	
Manufacturing	22
Science and Research	4
ICT	8
Finance	24
Hospitality	4
Retail	25
Business Services/Consultancy	37
Transport	11
Construction	3
Public Sector Administration	131
Hospitals, LHAs and Trusts	41
Schools and LEAs	62
Voluntary/Charitable bodies and associations including Unions	47

The "Work Life Balance Challenge Fund", which has been one strand of the Work-Life Balance Campaign, is nearing completion and no further rounds are planned. The DTI will continue to help employers establish better practice in their work places. Financial assistance will be accessible through the DTI's new Business Support

Scheme as from April 2004. DTI Business Links will become the first point of contact for companies interested in such support.

DTI will continue to make available a range of resources to assist, inform, and encourage best practice among employers who might wish to pursue Work-Life Balance initiatives in their workplaces. From April 2004 the dissemination of information about Work-Life Balance and Flexible Working policies and practice will be funded through the Business Support Scheme.

A major resource for the campaign has, and will continue to be, an interactive website which offers guidance on establishing initiatives in the workplace, flexible working legislation, and provides research and employer case studies which reflect the experiences of large and small companies across the country who have adopted work life balance policies and practices.

The site allows access to EMAR or the Employment market Analysis and Research (EMAR) site is a Research body fully funded by the DTI. It has an ongoing programme of research, which has complemented the Work-life Balance campaign.New legislation came into effect 6 April 2003. This was accompanied by information and guidance for both employers and employees. An information booklet entitled "New Laws for Working Parents—Key information for employers" was mailed direct to just under 100,000 SMEs (79 per cent. in the 5–49 employee category). The DTI has worked with ACAS to provide further guidance to employers through Acas' national helpline.

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total expenditure of the Department's Work-life Balance Fund has been in each year of its existence. [163541]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The table at Figure 1 sets out the total financial assistance to date provided through the Challenge Fund for each of the fund's five rounds.

Figure 1

£

	Amount
Round 1	2,015,443
Round 2	586,536
Round 3	3,333,061
Round 4	3,919,851
Round 5	193,575
Total	10,048,466

Working Time Directive

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the European Commission on ensuring the UK retains flexibility in implementing the Working Time Directive. [163570]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Both my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and I have met the European Commission several times over the last year with a view to maintaining the flexibility currently given by the Working Time Directive. Indeed, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State hopes to discuss this issue further with Stavros Dimas, the new Employment and Social Affairs Commissioner, in the near future.

HEALTH

Administration Costs

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on administration by *(a)* strategic health authorities, *(b)* primary care trusts and *(c)* NHS trusts in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [157580]

Mr. Hutton: Real terms expenditure on national health service administration, broken down by organisation from 1998–99, is shown in the table.

£ *thousands*

	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Health authorities and strategic health authorities	645,339	764,598	755,623	673,817
Primary care trusts	n/a	n/a	62,116	490,075
NHS trusts	1,289,777	1,286,661	1,306,971	1,306,018
Total	1,935,116	2,051,259	2,124,710	2,469,910

Bed Blocking

Mr. David Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment he has made of the performance of *(a)* Bournemouth borough council and *(b)* Dorset county council in tackling bed blocking arising at the Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospital Trust. [163800]

Dr. Ladyman: In the last four weeks, the Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospital National Health Service Trust has reported between 17 and 32 delayed discharges of residents of Bournemouth borough council. The same trust has reported, in the last four weeks, between 11 and 23 delayed discharges of residents of Dorset county council. These delays were due to a range of reasons; some patients were awaiting social services and others non-acute national health services services. The NHS trust, ambulance trust, five primary care trusts and three local authority social services departments have recently agreed an action plan to tackle these delays.

Care Homes

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that those carrying out inspections of care homes adhere to similar objectives and requirements. [162377]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* Inspections of care homes are carried out by the National Care Standards Commission, using a national methodology. They are responsible for ensuring the

requirements set down in the Care Homes Regulations 2001 are met and the National Minimum Standards are taken into account. This responsibility will fall to the Commission for Social Care Inspection from 1 April 2004.

Children (Mental Health)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how he plans to empower children meeting the criteria set out by the House of Lords in Gillick *v.* West Norfolk and Wisbech Area Health Authority in 1986 to consent to or refuse treatment to the same extent as an adult in the planned Mental Health Bill; and if he will make a statement; [162320]

(2) if he will introduce a legal duty on the managers of hospitals to secure *(a)* assessment of and *(b)* provision in the care plan for the family needs of a patient with parental responsibility made subject to compulsory mental health powers; and if he will make a statement; [162321]

(3) if he will bring forward a requirement in the draft Mental Health Bill that the clinical supervisor of a child subject to mental health law must be a specialist in child and adolescent mental health; [162322]

(4) whether he intends to incorporate into the planned Mental Health Bill the rights expressed in article 25 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of a child who has been placed by the competent authorities for the purposes of care, protection or treatment of his or her physical or mental health to a periodic review of *(a)* the treatment provided to the child and *(b)* all other circumstances relating to his or her placement. [162323]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Mental Health Bill Consultation Document, Cm. 5538–111, published in June 2002 contained a number of specific consultation questions on protecting children and young people with serious mental disorder. We have been considering carefully the responses to the consultation and further points raised at a recent meeting with stakeholders specifically looking at proposals for children and young people.

A revised and completed Mental Health Bill will be brought forward for pre-legislative scrutiny this session.

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he intends to reply to the letter to him from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 12 February with regard to Dr. P W Bishop. [164938]

Dr. John Reid: A reply was sent to the right hon. Member on 26 March 2004.

Dentists

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists' surgeries in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough are accepting new NHS patients. [162364]

Mr. Hutton: The available information on dental practices accepting new National Health Service patients is for primary care trust areas in London. The information in the table shows separate information for the main category of patient and includes the total number of practices.

This information was taken from the NHS.UK website and is correct for 18 March 2004. In addition, some other dental practices may take on new patients, but this is not recorded on the website.

Dental practices in London accepting new NHS patients

Strategic health authority	*Primary care trust*	*Children aged 0 to 18 years*	*Charge paying adults*	*Charge exempt adults*	*Occasional treatment to non-registered patients*	*Total number of practices in the area*
London		1,019	747	876	353	1,535
North Central London		157	111	115	72	296
	Barnet	26	4	5	13	94
	Camden	41	33	37	29	66
	Enfield	28	21	19	4	47
	Haringey	36	28	28	7	50
	Islington	26	25	26	19	39
North East London		186	173	178	109	261
	Barking and Dagenham	19	19	19	0	23
	City and Hackney	30	30	31	15	39
	Havering	21	19	20	2	44
	Newham	32	29	30	14	39
	Redbridge	35	33	33	41	55
	Tower Hamlets	24	17	24	14	28
	Walthamstow, Leyton and Leytonstone	25	26	21	23	33
North West London		334	230	281	61	429
	Brent	52	15	45	2	63
	Ealing	48	44	46	17	54
	Hammersmith and Fulham	29	24	28	15	39
	Harrow	40	23	22	0	54
	Hillingdon	35	30	30	6	43
	Hounslow	43	37	40	17	49
	Kensington and Chelsea	24	19	23	1	38
	Westminster	63	38	47	3	89

Dental practices in London accepting new NHS patients

Strategic health authority	*Primary care trust*	*Children aged 0 to 18 years*	*Charge paying adults*	*Charge exempt adults*	*Occasional treatment to non-registered patients*	*Total number of practices in the area*
South East London		194	131	177	45	278
	Bexley	32	15	26	15	41
	Bromley	55	24	51	1	65
	Greenwich	31	21	27	11	37
	Lambeth	27	26	27	6	48
	Lewisham	25	23	23	6	41
	Southwark	24	22	23	6	46
South West London		148	102	125	66	271
	Croydon	51	40	45	21	63
	Kingston	18	10	15	18	32
	Richmond and Twickenham	23	8	13	18	47
	Sutton and Merton	16	14	11	9	75
	Wandsworth	40	30	41	0	54

Digital Hearing Aids

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when residents of Northavon constituency will be able to access digital hearing aids via the NHS; and if he will make a statement. [163260]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 24 March 2004]:* Digital hearing aids will be available to people from Northavon who attend the audiology service at Southmead Hospital from March 2005.

Details of audiology departments that are or will be involved in the modernising hearing aid services project are available at the Royal National Institute for the Deaf's Modernising of Hearing Aid Services (MHAS) internet site at www.mhas.info.

E-auctions

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what systems are in place to ensure that products and services purchased by e-auction are subject to the same quality and clinical reliance tests as those purchased under normal tender procedures. [164342]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 29 March 2004]:* Suppliers invited to participate in an e-auction are initially subjected to a traditional tender process, where product quality issues are assessed. Only those suppliers who meet the minimum criteria on both commercial viability and product quality and standards are invited to submit an initial tender and to participate in any subsequent e-auction event. The award of contracts following an e-auction is not based on the lowest bid price, but on a combination of factors including quality, service and price.

Hospitals (Carshalton and Wallington)

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the hospitals in Carshalton and Wallington which ran a budget deficit in the year ending 31 March 2003; and how much this deficit was for each hospital. [163690]

Mr. Hutton: Information on deficits is available at national health service trust level and not for individual hospital units. Epsom and St. Helier NHS Trust includes St. Helier hospital, an acute hospital within Carshalton and Wellington. The 2002–03 audited NHS trust summarisation schedules show Epsom and St. Helier NHS Trust reporting a deficit of £2,193,000 in its accounts for 2002–03.

Medical Qualifications (EU)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions he has had with the European Commission on the recognition of qualifications for *(a)* nurses, *(b)* doctors and *(c)* midwives from the EU applicant countries; and if he will make a statement. [163620]

Mr. Hutton: The Department is in touch with the European Commission about the progress of the acceding countries in meeting their commitments in relation to the training of general care nurses, doctors and midwives and I continue to keep the regulatory bodies informed of developments.

NHS Childcare Provision

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners' surgeries take advantage of NHS child care provisions. [163085]

Mr. Hutton: Information on how many general practitioners' surgeries take advantage of national health service child care provision is not collected.

Recruitment/Retention Premiums

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 10 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1592W, on Agenda for Change, what maximum limits have been set on recruitment and retention premiums to *(a)* individual postholders and *(b)* groups of postholders. [163486]

Mr. Hutton: The "Agenda for Change" proposed agreement states that the combined value of any nationally awarded and locally awarded recruitment and retention premium shall not normally exceed 30 per cent. of basic salary. This applies to individual postholders and groups of postholders.

Rescue Services

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much joint training in chemical, biological,

radioactive and nuclear duties *(a)* has been and *(b)* is being carried out between ambulance services and fire and rescue services. [162706]

Mr. Hutton: Training courses to allow front tine ambulance staff to respond safely and effectively to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents have been, and are being, conducted by each ambulance service to a standard syllabus delivered by nationally trained local instructors. That syllabus was developed, and the instructors trained, through the police national training centre at Winterbourne Gunner, with combined input from each of the three main blue light services. The course content places particular emphasis on multi-agency aspects and requires input from the other emergency services at local level.

Confidence in dealing with chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear (CBRN) incidents is further strengthened through multi-agency exercises and combined CBRN training for ambulance, police and fire incident commanders.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what level of decontamination training has been given to ambulance crews. [162707]

Mr. Hutton: Each ambulance service has a cadre of staff trained to deal with the health aspects of the response to a chemical, biological, radioactive or nuclear incident. Those staff have been trained to work safely in a contaminated area, to decontaminate patients and to deliver basic life support.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of ambulance crews have been trained in the use of chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear protective equipment. [162719]

Mr. Hutton: The Ambulance Service Association reports that, to date, specialist training in the use of personal equipment has been provided for 2,500 front-line ambulance staff and that number is expected to increase to 3,000 by early summer 2004. The target is to create and maintain a trained cadre of 3,000 staff, which represents about 20 per cent. of front-line accident and emergency staff from ambulance services in England by the end of the year.

The Government have provided equipment and an additional financial contribution of £5,454,200 in 2003–04 to enable ambulance services to continue to develop and maintain specialist teams and training activities.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what type of chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear protective equipment has been given to ambulance crews. [162720]

Mr. Hutton: Every ambulance service has been equipped with suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) and mobile decontamination units to allow safe working for front-line staff and to enable the decontamination of patients.

The protective equipment supplied to national health service staff provides adequate protection against a wide range of industrial chemicals and other specifically identified hazards to which NHS staff might be exposed.

Strategic Health Authority Staff

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff are reported in the September 2003 Workforce Census as being employed by each strategic health authority. [163927]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* The information requested is shown in the table. Between September 2002 and 2003, the number of staff employed by strategic health authorities (SHAs) fell by 12 per cent.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS) staff and NHS hospital and community health services: Medical and non-medical staff directly employed by Strategic Health Authorities in England as at 30 September 2003

Headcount

		All medical and dental and non-medical staff
	England	3,540
Q01	Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire SHA	65
Q02	Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA	70
Q03	Essex SHA	69
Q04	North West London SHA	109
Q05	North Central London SHA	131
Q06	North East London SHA	163
Q07	South East London SHA	104
Q08	South West London SHA	91
Q09	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA	105
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley SHA	92
Q11	North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA	67
Q12	West Yorkshire SHA	82
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	55
Q14	Greater Manchester SHA	169
Q15	Cheshire and Merseyside SHA	208
Q16	Thames Valley SHA	133
Q17	Hampshire and Isle Of Wight SHA	144
Q18	Kent and Medway SHA	89
Q19	Surrey and Sussex SHA	299
Q20	Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire SHA	66
Q21	South West Peninsula SHA	114
Q22	Dorset and Somerset SHA	103
Q23	South Yorkshire SHA	402
Q24	Trent SHA	139
Q25	Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland SHA	86
Q26	Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA	93
Q27	Birmingham and the Black Country SHA	189
Q28	Coventry, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire SHA	103

Note:
Medical staff figures do not include staff employed by other organisations, even when they work in the SHA.
Sources:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census.

Working Time Directive

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has negotiated a concession in the European Working Time Directive that will allow postponement of implementation of the Directive beyond August for junior doctors. [163924]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* No. We are actively seeking changes to the Working Time Directive (WTD) through the European Commission's consultation process to enable national health service employers to comply with the WTD more easily.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Easter Uprising

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what his policy is regarding returning original documents held by the Public Record Office from the Easter uprising in Dublin in 1916 to *(a)* the nearest living relative and *(b)* the National Archives of Ireland. [162317]

Mr. Leslie: Public records relating to the British administration in Ireland in 1916 and subsequently selected for permanent preservation because of their historical importance form part of the archives of the UK Government, now held by the National Archives at Kew. They are kept there so that present and future generations of researchers can access the nation's collective memory as expressed in the written record.

The National Archives runs a full range of well-publicised copying services which are readily available to individuals and institutions if they wish to obtain copies of specific records. Further details can be obtained from its website at: http://www.pro.gov.uk/recordcopying/default.htm

In addition, the National Archives is willing to consider special copying arrangements in cases where it can be demonstrated that this would provide easier access to a significant number of people directly affected by the events described in those records.

Employment Agencies

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the employment agencies which the Department and its predecessors have used to supply temporary staff in each financial year since 1996–97 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [163809]

Mr. Leslie: My Department, and its predecessor, has a national contract with Kelly Services which began in April 2001 for the supply of temporary staff. Prior to that my Department had a contract with Manpower between 1996 and 2001.

My Department uses other agencies but information relating to these during the period in question is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

My Department uses temporary agency staff to meet short-term requirements and in areas where it is difficult to recruit and retain staff.

Magistrates Courts

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many trials for robbery and burglary in the *(a)* Ealing and Acton magistrates court and *(b)* Ipswich magistrates court have been (i) aborted and (ii) postponed in each of the last three years; and how many postponements of each postponed or aborted case there were before it came to trial or was aborted. [163748]

Mr. Leslie: The data on the number of trials for robbery and burglary in Ealing and Acton and Ipswich magistrates courts, which were aborted and postponed in each of the last three years, are not held.

However, data are collected on 'cracked' and 'ineffective' trials. A 'cracked' trial occurs when on the date of trial, either the defendant pleads guilty or is bound over, or the prosecution withdraws its case. An 'ineffective' trial occurs when on the trial date, the trial has to be adjourned owing to the action or in action of one or more of the prosecution, the defence or the court.

For trials in Ealing and Acton magistrates courts, out of a total of 1,084 trials in 2003, 356 were 'cracked' and 359 were 'ineffective'.

For Ipswich magistrates court, out of a total of 462 trials in 2003, 150 were aborted 'cracked' and 117 were postponed 'ineffective'.

The number of postponements of each 'cracked' or 'ineffective' case before it came to trial is not available.

Opinion Sampling

Mr. Laws: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what his estimate is of total expenditure by the Department on *(a)* focus groups and *(b)* opinion polls in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [162748]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested is not held centrally and a comprehensive reply, for other than the current financial year, could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Total expenditure by the Department on focus groups for the current financial year (2003–04) is expected to be around £230,000.

Total expenditure by the Department on opinion polls for the current financial year (2003–04) is expected to be around £330,000. These figures include the Public Guardianship Office and the Legal Services Commission, which carry out their own research independently.

Supreme Court

Lady Hermon: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* political parties and *(b)* other organisations in Northern Ireland on the Government's proposals for a supreme court. [164356]

Mr. Leslie: I have not met with political parties in Northern Ireland to discuss the UK Supreme Court. There have been ongoing discussions at official level between the Department for Constitutional Affairs and both the Northern Ireland Court Service and the Northern Ireland Office. In addition, responses to the consultation paper on the proposed UK Supreme Court were received from the following organisations:

the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission;

Training for Women Network Ltd;

the Bar Council of Northern Ireland; and

the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland on behalf of the Judges of the High Court and Court of Appeal in Northern Ireland.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Best Value

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact of best value on the efficient provision of local government services; and if he will make a statement. [163533]

Mr. Raynsford: Best value is a performance management framework for securing continuous improvement through the delivery of efficient, effective and economic services that meet users' needs.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has commissioned Cardiff Business School to evaluate the long-term impact of best value in English local councils. The findings to date reveal that best value is seen as a positive driver of change and that best value reviews are helping councils to improve the efficiency, quality and cost-effectiveness of services.

Council Housing

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many empty council homes there are in *(a)* Devon and *(b)* Cornwall. [164792]

Keith Hill: The information is as follows:

Total number of vacant local authority owned dwellings at 1 April 2003

	Number
Devon	150
Cornwall	80

Note:
Figures rounded to the nearest 10
Source:
ODPM's Housing Investment Programme returns

Department-Sponsored Bodies

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* total budget, *(b)* funding from his Department, *(c)* administration budget and *(d)* staff cost to his Department for the (i) Housing Revenue Account Group, (ii) Chester-le-Street Housing Advisory Board and (iii) Supporting People Practitioners Group were in financial years (A) 2002–03 and (B) 2003–04; and if he will make a statement on the (1) current and (2) future work of each body. [163640]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is as follows:

(i) The Housing Revenue Account Group. This group was wound up before March 2003. It had no separately identifiable budget.

(ii) The Chester-le-Street Housing Advisory Board was established by Chester-le-Street Council. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister did not provide any funds for nor meet any of the expenses of the Board.

(iii) Supporting People Practitioners Group. There was no separately identifiable budget for the Practitioners Group. It was wound up following the introduction of Supporting People.

Fire and Rescue Services

Mr. Flook: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effect on the threat to life from fire of implementing plans for a single control room for the fire and rescue services in the south west region; and if he will make a statement. [164589]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is creating a resilient national network of regional fire and rescue control centres which make possible more effective responses to local, regional or national incidents of significant/substantial scale or complexity. This approach strengthens the ability of the service to maximise national capacity to deal with exceptional call volumes, improve resilience and provide more effective fallback arrangements, and address business continuity requirements. The net effect of the improved arrangements will be a reduction in the threat to life, not just from fire, but from a wide range of other threats, not envisaged when the existing infrastructure for call handling and mobilising was developed.

Gypsies/Travellers

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which local authorities include a policy towards Gypsies and Travellers as a part of their homelessness strategy; and what percentage of local authorities this represents. [164099]

Yvette Cooper: This information is not currently available.

The Homelessness Act 2002 required all local housing authorities in England to publish a strategy by 30 July 2003 which aims to prevent homelessness and ensure that accommodation and support are available for people who become homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has commissioned an independent evaluation of all homelessness strategies, which will report later this year.

Housing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he makes of the fulfilment by registered social landlords of promises made to tenants in large scale voluntary transfers. [162710]

Keith Hill: The published research is contained in a DETR Research Report entitled 'Views on the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer Process (May 2000)', which explored whether tenants believed that the registered social landlords (RSLs) had delivered on promises made to tenants at time of transfer. The majority of respondents in the case study areas said that their landlord had delivered on at least some of their promises, with only 9 per cent. saying that the RSL had failed to deliver.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Housing Corporation have commissioned a long term evaluation of the programme, which will record what promises have been made to tenants and track whether these are being met.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what account he has made of the proposals set out in the Lyons Report in assessing future demands for housing in *(a)* the south east and *(b)* Hampshire. [164584]

Keith Hill: The requirements for housing in the south east, including Hampshire are set out in Regional Planning Guidance issued in 2001.

The requirements are in the process of being reviewed by the South East Regional Assembly who will need to take account of any impact the proposals in the Lyons Report may have on future demands for housing in the south east and Hampshire. The Government expect to receive a draft strategy in 2005 which will then be subject to public examination.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance his Department has issued with respect to levels of new-house building in the south west region; which sites in that region are targeted for development; and if he will make a statement. [164590]

Keith Hill: Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) published in September 2001 gives guidance on the levels of additional housing for which provision should be made in the region's structure plans over the period 1996–2016. It does not indicate specific sites. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to make a statement.

Local Authority Revenue (Tyne and Wear)

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* level of external debt and *(b)* annual cost of servicing that debt was in each local authority in Tyne and Wear in each of the last seven years. [164416]

Mr. Raynsford: The information is as follows.

(a) The level of external debt in each local authority in Tyne and Wear in each of the last seven years are tabled as follows. Figures for 1998 and 1999 are not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Level of external debt in Tyne and Wear by local authority at 31 March

£ million

	1997	2000	2001	2002	2003
Gateshead	267	336	313	316	313
Newcastle upon Tyne	450	447	460	463	461
North Tyneside	170	205	225	227	212
South Tyneside[1]	313	203	196	177	175
Sunderland	198	220	229	173	143

[1] Public Works Loan Board debt previously held by former Tyne and Wear county council has been excluded from these figures.
Sources:
ODPM monthly and quarterly borrowing returns.
Public Works Loan Board.

It should be noted that authorities with high levels of debt are generally those, which have undertaken capital investment, and that long-term borrowing to finance capital expenditure is currently regulated through the issue of credit approvals and, from 1 April 2004, will be subject to the Prudential System.

(b) Figures for external interest payments in each local authority in Tyne and Wear in each of the last seven years are tabled as follows:

External interest payments in Tyne and Wear by local authority

£ million

	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04[1]
Gateshead	23	25	23	22	21	20	22
Newcastle upon Tyne	40	40	40	39	38	40	39
North Tyneside	16	17	17	18	19	19	18
South Tyneside	n/a	n/a	6	5	5	4	6
Sunderland	16	18	17	17	7	7	9

n/a = Not available.
[1] Budgeted figures.
Sources:
1997–98 to 2002–03 ODPM Revenue Summary Returns.
2003–04 ODPM Budget Estimate Returns.

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of *(a)* council tax and *(b)* council house rents was collected in North Tyneside in each of the last five years. [164417]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is tabled as follows:

North Tyneside

Financial year	Percentage of council tax collected in-year[1]	Percentage of council house rents collected[2]
1998–99	91.7	99.3
1999–2000	93.8	98.4
2000–01	94.0	96.2
2001–02	95.2	96.8
2002–03	95.9	96.9

[1] As reported on QRC4 forms. Council tax collection continues after the end of the financial year to which amounts relate and so the final percentage collected is higher than the figures shown, which exclude amounts for earlier years.
[2] Data collected by the Audit Commission as Audit Commission or Best Value Performance Indicators.

Playing Fields (Taunton)

Mr. Flook: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning applications on playing fields have been approved in Taunton since 1997 that resulted in a lower provision of playing field space. [164556]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister only collates information on planning applications on playing fields where applications are referred first to the Secretary of State under the Town and Country Planning (Playing Fields)(England) Direction 1998 because of an outstanding objection from Sport England. One referral

has been made from Taunton Deane Borough Council since the Direction came into effect. Sport England subsequently withdrew its objection because no playing pitches were affected by the proposal. Detailed information on all planning applications for playing fields is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Boarding Schools

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* boarding schools and *(b)* boarding facilities within independent schools have closed since the National Care Standards Commission began its inspections. [164253]

Mr. Miliband: My right hon. Friend receives advice about welfare provision in independent boarding schools from the National Care Standards Commission, for the purposes of ensuring that the regulatory requirements relating to safeguarding and promoting welfare are met. Since April 2002, when the Commission began its inspections, none has resulted in enforcement action to close a school.

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which agencies have statutory authority to inspect or audit boarding schools. [164262]

Mr. Miliband: My right hon. Friend receives advice from the following agencies and authorities for the purposes of ensuring that boarding schools reach and maintain satisfactory standards of education, health, safety and welfare:

Ofsted

The Independent Schools Inspectorate, in the case of independent schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council

The National Care Standards Commission

Fire Authorities.

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many boarding schools have been examined by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in each of the last six financial years; and how many were identified as having a significant defect. [164301]

Mr. Miliband: Independent Schools which belong to an association affiliated to the Independent Schools Council (ISC), have, since 1 January 1999, been subject to inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) under arrangements agreed between the Government and the ISC. These inspections provide advice to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on whether member schools meet the regulatory requirements which all independent schools must satisfy.

The number of boarding schools inspected by the ISI between 1 January 1999 and 31 December 2003 is given in the table.

	Number of boarding schools inspected by ISI
1999	38
2000	65
2001	94
2002	89
2003	87

None of the inspections by ISI resulted in enforcement action to remove schools from the Register of Independent Schools, as any weaknesses identified by the inspections were addressed.

Adult Learning

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* disabled adults benefiting from adult learning initiatives and *(b)* adults with learning difficulties engaged in adult learning education courses there were in each year since 1997. [163735]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Unfortunately, we do not have reliable information about the number of disabled people participating in particular Government learning initiativesHowever, we have measured the participation of disabled people in adult learning in general (including: Government funded learning, job-related training, and self-taught learning) using the National Adult Learning Survey 2002 (NALS).

Overall, 76 per cent. of adults in England (aged 16 to 69 and outside continuous full-time education) had participated in at least one learning activity over the previous three years. Participation in learning was lower among people with a disability (64 per cent.) than those without a disability (81 per cent.).

We do not currently record participation in LEA-funded Adult Education for people with learning difficulties.

However, around 61 per cent. of adults with learning difficulties had participated in at least one learning activity over the previous three years (*Source:* English Local Labour Force Survey 2001). This compares to 76 per cent. for the general population as described above.

Adult Literacy/Numeracy

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what public funding has been spent on adult *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy in Crosby in each of the last five years. [160395]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The estimated total spend on Skills For Life (the Government's strategy for literacy, language and numeracy needs of all post-16 learners from pre-entry level up to and including level 2) and on Key Skills (essential skills of communication, application of number and information technology), from April 2001 to July 2003, in the Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area is set out in the table:

Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

£000

	Basic skills	*Key skills*
April to July 2001[1]	3,803	1,094
August 2001 to July 2002	6,575	1,564
August 2002 to July 2003	10,677	1,755

[1] The figures for April to July 2001 include costs incurred from August 2000 on learning aims continuing into April 2001.

From the information available to the LSC it has not been feasible to obtain estimates at constituency level or separate figures by subject without incurring disproportionate cost. Likewise it has not been feasible to obtain comparable figures for periods before April 2001 when the Skills for Life strategy was launched and the LSC was formed, but information shows it was considerably less than at present.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what public funding has been spent on adult *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy in Buckingham in each of the last five years. [161320]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The estimated total spend on "Skills For Life" (the Government's strategy for the literacy, language and numeracy needs of all post-16 learners (from pre-entry level up to and including level 2) and on Key Skills (essential skills of communication, application of number and information technology), from April 2001 to July 2003, in the Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area is set out in the table:

£000

	Basic skills	*Key skills*
April 2001 to July 2001[1]	2,445	674
August 2001 to July 2002	4,134	909
August 2002 to July 2003	6,028	1,197

[1] The figures for April to July 2001 include costs incurred from August 2000 on learning aims continuing into April 2001.

From the information available to the LSC it has not been feasible to obtain estimates at constituency level or separate figures by subject without incurring disproportionate cost. Likewise it has not been feasible to obtain comparable figures for periods before April 2001 when the "Skills For Life" strategy was launched and the LSC was formed, but information shows it was considerably less than at present.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on adult *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy in Chorley in each of the last five years. [161450]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The estimated total spend on "Skills For Life" (the Government's strategy for the literacy, language and numeracy needs of all post-16 learners (from pre-entry level up to and including level 2) and on Key Skills (essential skills of communication, application of number and information technology), from April 2001 to July 2003, in the Lancashire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area is set out in the following table.

£000

	Basic skills	*Key skills*
April 2001 to July 2001[1]	3,370	1,270
August 2001 to July 2002	6,577	1,857
August 2002 to July 2003	7,815	1,948

[1] The figures for April to July 2001 include costs incurred from August 2000 on learning aims continuing into April 2001.

From the information available to the LSC it has not been feasible to obtain estimates at constituency level or separate figures by subject without incurring disproportionate cost. Likewise it has not been feasible to obtain comparable figures for periods before April 2001 when the "Skills For Life" strategy was launched and the LSC was formed, but information shows it was considerably less than at present.

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what public funding has been spent on adult *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy in (i) the Burton constituency and (ii) Staffordshire in each of the last seven years. [161845]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The estimated total spend on "Skills For Life" (the Government's strategy for the literacy, language and numeracy needs of all post-16 learners (from pre-entry level up to and including level 2) and on Key Skills (essential skills of communication, application of number and information technology), from April 2001 to July 2003, in the Staffordshire Learning and Skills Council area is set out in the table:

£000

	Basic skills	*Key skills*
April 2001 to July 2001[1]	2,341	786
August 2001 to July 2002	3,123	1,006
August 2002 to July 2003	4,899	2,063

[1] The figures for April to July 2001 include costs incurred from August 2000 on learning aims continuing into April 2001.

From the information available to the LSC it has not been feasible to obtain estimates at constituency level or separate figures by subject without incurring disproportionate cost. Likewise it has not been feasible to obtain comparable figures for periods before April 2001 when the "Skills For Life" strategy was launched and the LSC was formed, but information shows it was considerably less than at present.

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding was spent on adult literacy and numeracy in North Tyneside local education authority in each of the last seven years. [164381]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The estimated total spend on "Skills For Life" (the Government's strategy for the literacy, language and numeracy needs of all post-16 learners (from pre-entry level up to and including level 2) and on Key Skills (essential skills of communication, application of number and information technology), from April 2001 to July 2003, in the Tyne and Wear Learning and Skills Council area is set out in the following table:

£000

	Basic skills	Key skills
April 2001 to July 2001[1]	4,570	783
August 2001 to July 2002	9,535	1,237
August 2002 to July 2003	14,032	883

[1] The figures for April to July 2001 include costs incurred from August 2000 on learning aims continuing into April 2001.

From the information available to the LSC it has not been feasible to obtain estimates at constituency level or separate figures by subject without incurring disproportionate cost. Likewise it has not been feasible to obtain comparable figures for periods before April 2001 when the Skills for Life strategy was launched and the LSC was formed, but information shows it was considerably less than at present.

Citizenship, Personal and Social Education

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the integration of citizenship, personal and social education across the curriculum. [164186]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Citizenship is a statutory subject in secondary schools. The teaching of personal, social and health Education (PSHE) is underpinned by a non-statutory framework across all key stages. Schools have flexibility on how they plan and deliver citizenship and PSHE, whether as discrete areas of the curriculum or integrated across the curriculum. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority produce a range of guidance documents across citizenship and PSHE.

Communication Skills

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what resources he is investing in delivery of communication skills within the curriculum of 11 to 16-year-olds. [164187]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Communication skills are an important and integral part of every pupil's learning experience. The general teaching requirements of the National Curriculum, which apply across all areas of the curriculum, state that pupils should be taught to express themselves correctly and appropriately and to read accurately and with understanding.

The programmes of study for English at Key Stage 3 and 4, state that pupils should learn to communicate confidently in a wide variety of contexts, adapting what they say and how they say it to different situations and people. English is one of the strands of the Key Stage 3 Strategy in which we are investing £670 million up to the end of March 2005. This aims to improve teaching and learning to develop pupils, at age 14, into independent learners and confident, effective communicators.

Some pupils have significant communication difficulties as the result of acquired or inherited conditions. We have established the Communication Aids Project (CAP) with £20 million funding to March 2006 to help such pupils through the provision of high technology communication aids.

Devon LEA

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much Devon schools have received in Standards Fund Grant in each year since its introduction. [164786]

Mr. Miliband: Standards Fund grants are allocated to local education authorities (LEAs), not directly to schools. It is not possible to identify separately the amounts allocated to schools by LEAs. The following table shows allocations for the Standards Fund for Devon local education authority since the Standards Fund was introduced in 1998–99. The allocations include both Government and local authority contributions. The figures for 1998–99 to 2002–03 include class size grant, worth £2.9 million in 2002–03. Since 2003–04, funding for class size grant is distributed via Education Formula Spending Shares (EFSS).

Standards fund allocations to Devon local education authority

£ million

	Revenue	Capital
1998–99	8.7	2.8
1999–2000	9.7	8.7
2000–01	18.2	16.4
2001–02	21.9	22.2
2002–03	25.4	20.4
2003–04	20.2	23.1

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent on adult *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy in Devon Local Education Authority in each of the last seven years. [164797]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The estimated total spend on Skills For Life (the Government's strategy for the literacy, language and numeracy needs of all post-16 learners from pre-entry level up to and including level 2) and on Key Skills (essential skills of communication, application of number and information technology), from April 2001 to July 2003, in the Devon and Cornwall Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area is set out in the table:

Devon and Cornwall Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

£000

	Basic skills	Key skills
April to July 2001[1]	3,131	714
August 2001 to July 2002	4,775	1,140
August 2002 to July 2003	6,289	1,388

[1] The figures for April to July 2001 include costs incurred from August 2000 on learning aims continuing into April 2001

From the information available to the LSC it has not been feasible to obtain estimates at constituency level or separate figures by subject without incurring disproportionate cost. Likewise it has not been feasible to obtain comparable figures for periods before April 2001 when the Skills for Life strategy was launched and the LSC was formed, but information shows it was considerably less than at present.

Teaching Assistants

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teaching assistants there were in schools in Greater London, broken down by local education authority in *(a)* each of the last seven years and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available. [163726]

Mr. Miliband: The following table gives the numbers of full time equivalent teaching assistants employed in maintained schools in the Greater London area broken down by local education authority for each year between 1997 and 2003, the latest year for which data are available.

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Greater London	8,165	8,870	9,788	11,740	14,331	15,340	17,510
Camden	203	238	249	303	364	439	467
City of London	2	3	3	3	3	0	7
Hackney	209	250	290	378	425	486	535
Hammersmith and Fulham	192	199	209	250	236	261	299
Haringey	354	357	377	419	492	649	684
Islington	250	247	272	346	364	350	480
Kensington and Chelsea	128	139	139	172	207	218	265
Lambeth	301	348	394	502	559	584	638
Lewisham	280	293	321	405	568	474	562
Newham	277	284	389	496	956	718	1,065
Southwark	349	415	433	646	805	746	713
Tower Hamlets	370	396	450	512	796	970	950
Wandsworth	334	373	371	460	470	379	531
Westminster	146	172	161	194	187	307	275
Barking and Dagenham	299	295	309	321	401	499	511
Barnet	292	340	404	479	548	742	717
Bexley	196	229	276	313	384	319	560
Brent	263	301	356	389	443	453	475
Bromley	208	231	232	273	357	442	504
Croydon	397	406	507	532	658	627	865
Ealing	344	363	372	403	508	450	528
Enfield	251	291	294	503	586	811	879
Greenwich	358	398	435	509	650	648	727
Harrow	268	265	291	303	302	328	429
Havering	166	174	203	260	303	312	518
Hillingdon	304	341	377	423	510	517	585
Hounslow	276	281	295	328	380	401	400
Kingston upon Thames	127	129	155	174	215	219	254
Merton	191	205	223	243	289	251	300
Redbridge	191	234	273	365	450	583	620
Richmond upon Thames	102	106	111	128	158	213	216
Sutton	156	172	205	233	264	337	314
Waltham Forest	381	395	414	475	494	606	637

Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Literacy

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people in Greater London, broken down by borough, were classified as *(a)* innumerate and *(b)* illiterate in each year since 1995. [163727]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: There are no annual data available on levels of literacy and numeracy levels in Greater London since 1995. However the DfES Skills for Life survey published in October 2003 provides estimates of the numbers of people who are at various literacy and numeracy skill levels for Greater London Local Learning and Skills Council Areas. The findings are summarised in the following tables. For London as a whole 46 per cent. of the population are at level 2[1], 35 per cent. are at level 1[2] and 19 per cent. at entry level 3 or below[3], which roughly equates to below a G grade at GCSE, for literacy. The figures for the London Local Learning and Skills Council Areas should be treated with caution since they are based on small sample sizes.

[1] Level 2 is considered to be equivalent to the standard of an A*-C pass at GCSE

[2] Level 1 is considered to be equivalent to the standard of a grade D-G pass at GCSE.

[3] Entry Level 3 or below approximately equates to a standard of less than a grade G pass at GCSE.

Table 1: Literacy levels for London and England

	Central (170)	*North (107)*	*South (336)*	*East (336)*	*West (263)*	*Total for London (1212)*	*Total for England (8730)*
Adults at entry Level 3 literacy or below							
Number	51,000	99,000	218,000	320,000	230,000	918,000	5,200,000
Percentage	8	23	17	24	22	19	16

Table 1: Literacy levels for London and England

	Central (170)	North (107)	South (336)	East (336)	West (263)	Total for London (1212)	Total for England (8730)
Adults at Level 1 literacy							
Number	183,000	154,000	427,000	672,000	390,000	1,620,000	12,600,000
Percentage	27	37	32	36	38	35	40
Adults at Level 2 or above literacy							
Number	433,000	166,000	672,000	520,000	406,000	2,186,000	14,000,000
Percentage	65	40	51	40	40	46	44

Table 2: Numeracy levels for London and England

	Central	North	South	East	West	Total for London	Total for England
Adults at entry Level 3 or below							
Number	206,000	209,000	465,000	773,000	625,000	2,278,000	14,900,000
Percentage	30	58	37	56	59	48	47
Adults at Level 1							
Number	219,000	89,000	376,000	339,000	237,000	1,247,000	8,813,000
Percentage	33	24	30	25	22	26	28
Adults at Level 2 or above							
Number	249,000	67,000	420,000	258,000	198,000	1,192,000	8,121,000
Percentage	37	18	33	19	19	26	25

Education Funding (North-west)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding was spent per pupil on *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary education in (i) Ribble Valley and Fulwood, (ii) Lancashire and (iii) the North West in each of the last five years. [161807]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is submitted to the Department according to local education authority areas rather than districts within an area. Ribble Valley and Fulwood is a district of Lancashire Local Education Authority. The information for Lancashire LEA is as follows:

Net Current Expenditure per pupil

	Pre-primary education		Primary education		Pre-primary and primary education		Secondary education	
	Lancashire	North West	Lancashire	North West	Lancashire	North West	Lancashire	North West
1997–98	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,824	1,853	2,631	2,60C
1998–99	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,002	2,021	2,701	2,73S
1999–2000	7,130	8,759	2,108	2,150	2,173	2,203	2,763	2,834
2000–01	11,033	13,927	2,326	2,384	2,437	2,471	2,914	3,05S
2001–02	16,391	20,711	2,629	2,670	2,797	2,796	3,230	3,424

Notes:

1. The financial data are taken from local education authorities' Section 52 Outturn Statements submitted to the DfES from 1999–2000 onwards and the ODPM's RO1 statement prior to then.
2. Pupil data are drawn from the Annual Schools Census adjusted to be on a financial year basis.
3. The NCE per pupil figures for pre-primary and primary relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in the pre-primary sector and maintained primary schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained nursery and primary schools sector.
4. The NCE per pupil figures for secondary relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in maintained secondary schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained secondary schools sector.
5. 1997–98 figures are for Lancashire LEA prior to local government reorganisation. From 1998–99 onwards parts of Lancashire LEA became Blackburn LEA and Blackpool LEA.
6. 1999–2000 figures reflect the return of GM schools to local authority maintenance.
7. Figures used are cash terms as reported by the LEA.

Enterprise Advisers

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in Crosby have had enterprise advisers working with them to encourage enterprise practice. [164400]

Alan Johnson: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Mark Haysom the LSC's Chief Executive will write to the hon. Member and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Europass Scheme

Ms Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans the Government have to participate in the EU initiative on the Europass scheme. [164092]

Alan Johnson: The Government intend to participate fully in the Europass initiative when it has been agreed by the EU institutions, including the Council of Ministers.

Export Control Act

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance his Department has given to higher education establishments on the implementation of the Export Control Act 2002; and if he will make a statement. [163676]

Nigel Griffiths: I have been asked to reply.

Detailed user guidance for those operating under the new controls was published in November 2003. This guidance included an explanation of what these controls mean in practice for academia. Officials from the DTI's Export Control Organisation have been working with representatives of academia to help their members become aware of, understand and operate the new controls.

Mathematics

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which of the recommendations made by the report of Professor Adrian Smith's inquiry into post-14 mathematics education on secondary school mathematics teacher shortages he intends to act on; and if he will make a statement. [163825]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* As I announced on 24 February, the Government will consider the report "Making Mathematics Count" carefully before deciding on the ways forward.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what estimate he has made of *(a)* the shortfall of qualified full-time equivalent mathematics teachers, *(b)* the percentage and number of mathematics teachers who have no post A-level qualification in mathematics and *(c)* the percentage and number of full-time equivalent qualified mathematics teachers employed in tasks other than teaching mathematics; and if he will make a statement; [163826]

(2) how many full-time equivalent mathematics teachers with post A level mathematics qualifications there were in secondary schools in England in each year since 1997; and how many such teachers transferred to the further education sector in that period. [163827]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* Data about the subject qualifications held by teachers are collected periodically through a sample survey of maintained secondary schools in England. The most recent survey was conducted in November 2002 and showed that 76 per cent. of the teachers who taught some mathematics held a post A level qualification in mathematics, while 88 per cent. of mathematics periods were taught by teachers with a post-A level qualification in mathematics. We estimate that at November 1996 there were approximately 20,200 full-time teachers, who had a post A level qualification in mathematics, teaching some mathematics in maintained secondary schools. At November 2002 there were approximately 21,300.

Data on the number of unfilled teacher vacancies are collected through the annual survey of teachers in service and teacher vacancies (Form 618g). At January 2003, there were 316 unfilled vacancies for full-time mathematics teachers in maintained secondary schools in England, 70 fewer than in January 2002 and 94 fewer than in January 2001. In the 1999–2000 academic year the government introduced Golden Hello incentives to encourage recruitment to teacher training courses in mathematics. Between 1998–99 and September 2003 the number of mathematics teacher trainees rose by 74 per cent. from 1,120 to 1,950.

Data on the number of mathematics teachers employed in tasks other than teaching mathematics or who transfer from the maintained schools sector to the further education sector are not collected centrally.

Modern Apprenticeships

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what targets his Department has on the numbers taking part in modern apprenticeship courses; and what assessment he has made of the overall number of apprentices. [164084]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: For the first question I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 18 March 2004, *Official Report,* column 654. The average number of modern apprentices in learning in January 2004 was 255,623. This is the highest level of participation since the programme began in 1994.

Overseas Students

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average course fee paid by overseas students is on *(a)* non-degree, *(b)* undergraduate and *(c)* postgraduate courses at colleges and universities. [164152]

Alan Johnson: Tuition fees vary widely between individual institutions and courses of study. According to the British Council the average annual course fee paid by overseas students for a non-degree course is estimated at £4,000. According to a recent survey by Universities UK, the average annual cost of an undergraduate course is £7,475 for classroom-based, £9,500 for laboratory-based, and £18,800 for clinical courses; and the average annual cost for a postgraduate course is £7,650 for classroom-based, £9,700 for laboratory-based, and £18,750 for clinical.

Pupil Mobility

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes he has made since February 2003 to his policy on the introduction of a targeted grant for local education authorities with high mobility. [163419]

Mr. Miliband: There have been no changes since February 2003 to the policy on the introduction of a targeted grant to local education authorities with high mobility.

School Budgets (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools in Greater London, broken down by London borough, ran a budget deficit in the year ended 31 March 2003; and how much this deficit was for each school. [162333]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

School Innovation

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to his answer of 18 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 475W, on school innovation, how many schools have been granted the power to innovate, broken down by area of innovation. [164624]

Mr. Miliband: There have been four schools whose applications to the Power to Innovate have been granted. These are as follows:

Quantity (Schools)	*Relevant legislation*	*Innovation*
3	The Changing of School Session Times (England) Regulations 1999	To extend the length of the school day mid academic year, rather than wait until the beginning of the new school year. The purpose of the innovation was to provide extra curricular activities for pupils, freeing up time for teachers to work on planning, preparation, and to draw up education plans for individual pupils
1	The Changing of School Session Times (England) Regulations 1999	To change the timings of the school day without the requirements set out in regulations to give the minimum of three months notice to parents and to consult parents at a meeting (instead parents were consulted by correspondence). The purpose of the innovation was to end the school day one hour early on alternate Wednesdays from September 2003, allowing staff to have a dedicated two-hour period once a fortnight for planning, preparation, assessment, and to hold meetings.

School Computers

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on computers for schools in Greater London, broken down by local education authority, in each of the past seven years. [163729]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Funding for information and communications technologies (ICT) in schools has been allocated through the Standards Fund since 1998–99. Details of funding for schools in London (including local education authority matched funding) have been placed in the Libraries.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils per computer there are in schools in Greater London, broken down by local education authority. [163730]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested is not available centrally.

Figures for England, which were derived from a sample of schools, are shown in the table.

Average number of pupils[1] per computer (used solely or mainly for teaching and learning purposes) by type of school—England—year end March 2003

2003	*Number*
Maintained Primary Schools	7.9
Maintained Secondary Schools	5.4
Maintained Special Schools	3.0

[1] Full-time equivalent numbers of pupils.

The latest information on ICT in schools was published in Statistical Bulletin "Survey of Information and Communications Technology in Schools 2003", which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

North Tyneside LEA

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students living in North Tyneside local education authority have benefited from New Opportunities bursaries since the scheme was set up. [164370]

Alan Johnson: Information about Opportunity Bursaries is held at the level of institutions that provide higher education provision. Apart from that, it is not possible to extract from the data the number of awards for students in any given area.

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what investment there has been in *(a)* sports and *(b)* music in schools in North Tyneside local education authority in each of the last seven years. [164377]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information is not held centrally. Within the context of the statutory National Curriculum, where music is compulsory for pupils aged 5 to 14, and Physical Education (PE) is compulsory for pupils aged 5 to 16, it is for individual schools to use their budgets as they judge appropriate.

The Government are investing more than £1 billion in England to transform PE, school sport and club links. The funding will help deliver an ambitious Public Service Agreement target, shared with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, to increase the percentage of 5 to 16-year-olds who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006.

The Department is providing £909,086 to support the delivery of 2 School Sport Partnerships in the North Tyneside LEA area. The partnerships include 12 secondary and 51 primary schools and provide enhanced sports opportunities for all young people and ensure that their pupils spend a minimum of two hours a week on high quality PE and School Sport.

The Music Standards Fund (MSF) supports Local Education Authority Music Services, which provide activities including workshops, festivals, small group and ensemble tuition and curriculum support. Since 1999, the following MSF payments have been made to North Tyneside LEA Music Service.

	£
2003–04	213,983
2002–03	203,983
2001–02	154,000
2000–01	73,470
1999–2000	53,375

Note:
£203,983 has been allocated for 2004–05.

Furthermore, the New Opportunities Fund has provided schools in the North Tyneside LEA area with £3,528,950 to specifically enhance music, PE and school sport facilities.

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teaching assistants, *(b)* teachers and *(c)* teaching vacancies there were in schools in North Tyneside local education authority in each of the last seven years. [164380]

Mr. Miliband: The following table shows the number of full-time equivalent teaching assistants, regular teachers and full-time teacher vacancies in maintained schools in North Tyneside Local Education Authority in each January between 1997 and 2003.

	Teaching assistants	*Teachers*	*Teacher vacancies*
1997	105	1,650	0
1998	216	1,640	0
1999	217	1,630	26
2000	237	1,600	16
2001	274	1,820	14
2002	184	1,690	8
2003	305	1,650	5

Source:
Annual School Census and the annual survey of teachers in service and teacher vacancies (618G)

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the level of local education authority funding per pupil in Tyneside *(a)* is for 2004–05 and *(b)* was in 1996–97. [164418]

Mr. Miliband: The following table provides total revenue funding per pupil (age three to 19) figures for North Tyneside and South Tyneside for 2004–05 and 1997–98—the first year for which comparative data are available. 2004–05 figures are still provisional.

	North Tyneside	*South Tyneside*
1997–98	2,620	2,750
2004–05	3,570	3,820

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much North Tyneside schools have received in Standards Fund Grant in each year since its introduction. [164362]

Mr. Miliband: Standards Fund grants are allocated to local education authorities (LEAs), not directly to schools. It is not possible to identify separately the amounts allocated to schools by LEAs. The following table shows allocations for the Standards Fund for North Tyneside local education authority since the Standards Fund was introduced in 1998–99. The allocations include both Government and local authority contributions. The figures for 1998–99 to 2002–03 include class size grant, worth £0.4 million in 2002–03. Since 2003–04, funding for class size grant is distributed via Education Formula Spending Shares (EFSS).

Standards fund allocations to North Tyneside local education authority

£

	Revenue	*Capital*
1998–99	2.1	1.5
1999–2000	3.8	2.2
2000–01	7.9	4.8
2001–02	10.0	6.8
2002–03	12.2	8.5
2003–04	12.6	9.1

School Places (Ribble Valley)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many new school places have been created in each year since 1997, in schools in the Ribble Valley parliamentary constituency. [R] [163928]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* We do not hold the information in the form requested. However, funding to support the provision of new pupil places in Lancashire local education authority (LEA) has been based on the following numbers of new places.

Year	*Primary*	*Secondary*
1998–99	124	215
1999–2000	—	548
2000–01	—	436
2001–02	—	40
2002–03	—	111
2003–04	180	35

Note:
Allocations related to the authority's forecast of new pupil places required three years hence.

School Playing Fields

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school playing fields have been disposed of since 2001; and what purposes the land was used for in each case. [163663]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires local authorities and schools to obtain the written consent of the Secretary of State before they can dispose of any part of a school's playing field. Schools are only allowed to dispose of genuinely surplus areas of playing fields. All sale proceeds from approved applications are used to provide new or improved sports or education facilities at maintained schools.

Since 2001, only 40 applications have been approved that would result in the loss of an area of school playing field that is capable of forming at least a small sports pitch of 2000m^2. Some 19 of these cases are at closed or closing school sites. Of the 21 cases at operating schools, 18 of them included proposals to provide better sports

facilities, including 11 new sports halls and eight all-weather pitches. The remaining three cases provided improved school facilities including a new school and new school buildings.

The purpose of our assessment process is to ensure that the land is genuinely surplus to needs, not to monitor its future use. That is a matter for the local planning authority. We, therefore, do not record the purposes to which the land will be used following approval to dispose.

Schools (Computers)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on computers for schools in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in each year since 1996. [164181]

Mr. Tom Clarke: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer to his question on funding allocated to Lancashire for information and communications technology (ICT) in schools across the authority on 16 March, *Official Report*, column 226W. Our records show that Lancashire did not receive any specific funding for ICT in 1996–97 or 1997–98. Funding is not allocated or collected on a constituency basis.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils per computer there were in schools in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in each year since 1996. [164182]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested is not available centrally.

Figures for England, which were derived from a sample of schools, are shown in the table.

Average number of pupils[1] per computer (used solely or mainly for teaching and learning purposes) by type of school

England – Year end March 1996–2003

	Maintained primary	*Maintained secondary*	*Maintained special*
1996	19.0	9.0	4.0
1997	[2]	[2]	[2]
1998	17.6	8.7	4.5
1999	13.4	8.4	3.7
2000	12.6	7.9	3.7
2001	11.8	7.1	3.2
2002	10.1	6.5	3.4
2003	7.9	5.4	3.0

[1] Full-time equivalent numbers of pupils.

[2] Not available

The latest information on ICT in schools was published in Statistical Bulletin 'Survey of Information and Communications Technology in Schools 2003', which is available on the Department's web-site www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Speech Therapists

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many speech therapist posts in special schools in London were unfilled in each local education authority in each year from 1997 to 2004. [164158]

Mr. Miliband: Data on the number of vacancies for speech therapists in maintained special schools are not collected centrally.

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many speech therapists were employed in special schools in each local education authority in London in each year from 1997 to 2004. [164159]

Mr. Miliband: Data on the number of speech therapists in maintained special schools are not collected centrally.

Students (South Derbyshire)

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many students there were in the most recent academic year for which statistics are available whose home prior to commencing their higher education course was in the South Derbyshire constituency; [157399]

(2) what proportion of students leaving school or college at 18 whose home was in the South Derbyshire constituency commenced a higher education course in the most recent academic year for which statistics are available. [157400]

Alan Johnson *[pursuant to his reply 11 March 2004, Official Report, c. 1745W]*: Figures at constituency level are not held centrally.

The available information covers students accepted for entry to full time undergraduate courses via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) by local education authority (LEA). The figures show that in autumn 2002, 3,508 students of all ages from South Derbyshire LEA obtained a place in HE. In the same year, 22.5 per cent. of all 18-year-olds from South Derbyshire LEA obtained a place.

Teacher Recruitment

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to attract teachers who have taken early retirement back into the profession on *(a)* a part-time and *(b)* a voluntary basis; and if he will make a statement. [164201]

Mr. Miliband: Working through some of our national partners and contractors, such as the NCSL, TTA and Capita, we have encouraged the increased use of retired teachers with our plans for remodelling the school workforce and promoting 'Keeping in Touch' and 'Return to Teach' programmes. It is however up to local authorities and schools to determine their local needs for voluntary support staff.

More specifically, for those teachers who retired on ill-health grounds from the Teachers' Pension Scheme, regulations came into effect on 1 January 2004 (The Education Health Standards England Regulations 2003) which will enable such former teachers to be re-employed, or work on a voluntary basis, in the education sector in a non-teaching capacity.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 31 March 2004

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Supermarket Code of Practice

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will respond to the Office of Fair Trading's assessment of the Supermarket Code of Practice. [164073]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) announced on 20 February 2004 that it would carry out an audit of the supermarkets' own records to determine whether there is evidence to support complaints about the Code made by various suppliers. When OFT have finalised their assessment, DTI is ready to look closely at the findings and any recommendations for action.

BACS

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress her Department has made to manage the changeover from the Bank Automated Clearing System to the new BACSTEL-IP system for electronic payments. [164327]

Ms Hewitt: The Department's account services provider, Amey BPO Services, have made arrangements to be ready for migration to BACSTEL-IP as and when required by the Bank of England.

Competitiveness Council

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 17 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 326–27W, to the hon. Member for Clydesdale (Mr. Hood), on the Competitiveness Council, for what reasons no agreement was reached on the regulation for the Community Patent. [164294]

Ms Hewitt: Agreement was not reached because of an unresolved issue over whether translations of the claims of the patent, which are required to be filed in all official languages of the European Union, should be for information only, or whether they should have full legal effect. One view is that a company should not be disadvantaged if it infringes a patent due to a bad translation. At the other end of the spectrum, various delegations believe that giving legal effect to translations would raise costs for everyone and increase uncertainty. The UK is anxious to see a compromise which recognises industry's clear view that excessive translation costs would make a Community Patent of little value compared to existing arrangements.

Entrepreneurship

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department has taken to improve the start-up advice available to entrepreneurs. [163314]

Nigel Griffiths: The government has a range of services and initiatives in place aimed at helping those thinking of starting a business. A comprehensive range of advice, information and support is delivered through the network of Business Link Operators and its partners. The Businesslink.gov website contains tailored advice and information aimed at those thinking about starting a business. This includes a new online training directory to help people thinking of starting a business, or in their first year of trading, to access training in order to innovate, improve, grow and be more competitive. Steps have also been taken to address concerns expressed by those starting in business about understanding their responsibilities with the publication of the 'No Nonsense Guide to Government rules for setting and running your business'. This brings together in one place all the rules and regulations that affect start-up businesses.

Export Credit Guarantees

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when and where payment was made by the Export Credits Guarantee Department of the agent's commission on the contract the ECGD backed on the sale of bridges to Papua New Guinea; and what percentage of the contract the commission represented. [163537]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: ECGD does not pay agent's commission on contracts it supports. However, the element of the contract price which reflects commission payments can be financed by banks within the loans ECGD guarantees.

ECGD is normally obliged to treat all information provided by its customers on the payment of agent's commission confidentially, using it to establish that the payment and value of the commission are acceptable.

Following our request, the exporter has agreed that ECGD can disclose that it employed a private engineering company to act both as local agent and sub-contractor. Commission formed an element of this arrangement and it was payable as work progressed. The commission was financed under the ECGD-guaranteed loan.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Export Credits Guarantee Department covered agent's commission on the contract it supported on the addition of Trains 4 and 5 to the liquified natural gas plant at Bonny Island in Nigeria; what percentage of the contract the commission represented; and what the *(a)* place and *(b)* date of payment were. [158313]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: ECGD is not covering agent's commission on this contract.

Post Office Closures

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment Post Office Ltd. made prior to the programme of closure of sub-post offices in Wakefield of its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in respect of access to services provided to customers who are *(a)* blind or visually impaired, *(b)* wheelchair users, *(c)* users of electric wheelchairs, *(d)* deaf, *(e)* frail due to advanced years, *(f)* mentally incapacitated or impaired and *(g)* sufferers

from heart conditions, emphysema or other conditions which restrict mobility, and if she will make a statement; [164244]

(2) what assessment was made during the development of the Post Office Area Plan for Wakefield of the impact of closure of sub-post offices on customer waiting time at the main post office in Wakefield city; [164245]

(3) what action Post Office Ltd. is taking to reduce customer waiting time at the main post office in Wakefield City. [164246]

Mr. Timms: These are operational matters for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to respond direct to the hon. Member.

Small Businesses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the steps she has taken to encourage small businesses to grow in the United Kingdom. [163310]

Nigel Griffiths: The latest Barclays figures on Start-ups and Closures show that there were 384,900 start-ups in England and Wales in the 12 months ending September 2003, an increase of 3 per cent. on the year before.

A range of financial support is available to improve SMEs' access to finance, including the Small Firms Loan Guarantee scheme, R&D grants, Regional Venture Capital Fund, the Community Development Venture Fund, and Early Growth Funds.

OECD's review of EU countries ('Regulation, Productivity and Growth Economic Survey of the United Kingdom' (January 2003) shows the UK has almost the lowest administration cost and fewer regulations for entrepreneurs than any other EU country and that across Europe tax burdens on small business are lowest in the UK. The OECD Economic Survey—the United Kingdom (January 2004) indicates that in the UK economic and administrative regulations inhibiting competition and barriers to trade are among the lowest in the OECD.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department has taken to reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses. [163323]

Nigel Griffiths: Government are committed to reducing the regulatory burden on small business, in particular those regulations that act as a barrier to start-up and growth. We are determined to ensure that we only regulate when there is good reason to do so and when the benefits clearly justify the costs. Government have strengthened both the Regulatory Impact Assessment process and the guidance on the small firms impact test. Costs and benefits of proposed regulations are now properly analysed—and published.

Some of the highlights of the specific measures we have introduced to improve the regulatory environment for small business include:

Publishing the Government Action Plan for Small Business reiterating not only the commitment to better regulation but also our commitment to improving the regulatory environment for small firms.

Cutting form-filling and red tape for 700,000 small businesses with the new flat rate VAT scheme as well as abolishing automatic penalties for late filling of VAT which cost businesses £99 million in 1996–07.

Securing agreement across Government that there should be 12 weeks between the making of new regulation and its implementation, thereby allowing small firms more time to adopt and adapt to new regulations.

Publishing the Regulatory Reform Action Plan—setting out over 250 proposals for better regulation and reform. The Action Plan is designed to make it quicker and easier to repeal out of date legislation.

Raising the small company audit exemption threshold to the EU maximum of £5.6 million, saving 219,000 small businesses up to £274 million.

Announcements in the recent budget also highlight Governments commitment to reducing the regulatory burden for small firms.

A further increase in the VAT threshold to £58,000 keeping 5,000 of the smallest businesses out of the VAT system.

Government Departments reporting on their own regulatory performance. The independent Better Regulation Taskforce will publish its own analysis of these reports and Departments regulatory performance will be taken into account in the 2004 spending review.

Regulatory proposals that are likely to impose major new burdens on business will have to be cleared by the Panel for Regulatory Accountability, chaired by the Prime Minister, based on a thorough Regulatory Impact Assessment that has been agreed by the Cabinet Office Regulatory Impact Unit.

We have already introduced common commencement dates for employment legislation on two days per year in April and October. The Small Business Service will be consulting with Government Departments and small business on extending common commencement dates to other areas of legislation.

Government accepts in principle the benefits to business of moving to direct payment of the Working Tax Credit. This has the potential to reduce the cost of payroll administration benefiting 1.2 million small businesses.

All of these measures are designed to reduce the regulatory burden on small firms but it should be noted that the UK is not over-regulated compared to other countries.

Working Time Directive

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the cost to British businesses of complying with the Working Time Directive in *(a)* the ceramic sector, *(b)* construction products, *(c)* quarry products and *(d)* all products in total. [164581]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The cost to British business of complying with the Working Time Directive for all industries is estimated to be around £2.5 billion per annum. Estimates for the ceramic, construction and quarrying sectors are not available.

TRANSPORT

Aviation

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress was made at the most recent International Civil Aviation Organisation meeting on sustainable aviation. [165168]

Mr. McNulty: The 6th triennial meeting of the ICAO Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP) was held in Montreal, 2–12 February 2004. Progress was made on a number of issues. The principal achievements were (i) agreement on a new international standard for the minimum NOX performance of new aircraft engine types in the landing and takeoff cycle that is 12 per cent. more stringent than the current standard, coming into effect in 2008, (ii) agreement on the text of a guidance document on the application of the ICAO 'balanced approach' to noise management at airports, (iii) agreement to continue work on two possible avenues for the future participation of aviation in emissions trading at a global level, and (iv) agreement on a stretching programme of work for the period 2004–07, with a particular emphasis on long term goal-setting and the proper examination of trade-offs between different environmental impacts. Progress was also made on various lower-profile technical issues, but there was no progress on the use of charges to address the global environmental impacts of aviation, on which CAEP remains deeply divided.

All CAEP decisions are subject to confirmation by the ICAO Council and the full ICAO Assembly, 27 September-7 October 2004.

BACS

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress his Department has made to manage the changeover from the Bank Automated Clearing System to the new BACSTEL-IP system for electronic payments. [164324]

Mr. McNulty: The Financial Accounting Services Division (FASD) of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides accounting services including banking services to the Department for Transport as a shared service.

FASD is discussing with the supplier of its banking services the options for managing the changeover from the Bank Automated Clearing System (BACS) to the new BACSTEL-IP system for electronic payments.

Buses

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of buses he estimates allow full wheelchair access for users. [165150]

Mr. McNulty: An annual survey of vehicle operators carried out by the Department for Transport indicates that approximately 30 per cent. of the 48,000 full size buses operating in Great Britain as Public Service Vehicles, are low floor vehicles offering access for wheelchair users. The percentage operating in any given area will vary but in major cities it is likely to be considerably higher. The current figure for London is around 90 per cent.

These vehicles comprise 6,300 that meet the full wheelchair accessibility requirements of the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000, and a further 7,700 which were manufactured prior to these regulations coming into force, which are low floor vehicles providing a good level of accessibility for wheelchair users.

Disabled Parking Badges

Claire Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to introduce new regulations to permit disabled children under two to obtain disabled parking badges. [165173]

Mr. McNulty: We are already working on a number of changes to the Blue Badge Scheme which require secondary legislation. These include extending the Scheme to those children under two whose medical needs require the transport of medical equipment at all times. We expect to consult on draft regulations later this year and to introduce the changes as soon as possible thereafter.

DVLA

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency spent on advertising in *(a)* the current financial year and *(b)* 1997; and how much they are planning to spend next year. [164346]

Dr. Howells: The information requested on Publicity/Marketing costs for 1997, 2003 and 2004 is as follows:

1997–98 some £3.4 million (as published in the Agency's accounts),

2003–04 some £14 million (current forecast), and

2004–05 some £13 million (current forecast).

The figures represent the Agency's spend/forecast on a resource basis for publicity and marketing. Since 1997 the Agency has seen an increase in expenditure in this area due to our commitment to reducing vehicle crime and our delivery of electronic services.

Main area of increase for this financial year (2003–04) includes Continuous Registration, Mandatory V5, Vehicle Identity Checks and Fee for a new Registration Document (V62). The forecasts for next financial year (2004–05) include Electronic Vehicle Licensing and Accelerating Issue of Harmonised Registration Certificate.

Heavy Goods/Public Service Vehicles

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many roadside checks were carried out on *(a)* heavy goods vehicles and *(b)* public service vehicles in each of the last 10 years. [163835]

Mr. Jamieson: The number of roadside checks carried out by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (formerly the Vehicle Inspectorate) on heavy goods vehicles and public service vehicles in each of the last 10 years is shown in the following table.

Roadworthiness roadside checks

Vehicle category	*HGV motor vehicles*	*HGV trailers*	*PSV*
2002–03	64,373	21225	20,287
2001–02	56,984	17,699	18,470
2000–01	68,270	22,159	21,160
1999–2000	74,459	24,046	23,516
1998–99	69,718	23,683	20,635
1997–98	85,023	28,096	28,045
1996–97	93,914	32,769	28,809
1995–96	85,523	28,335	23,987
1994–95[1]	13,4046	32,053	32,338
1993–94[1]	14,5807	32,448	32,645

[1] Figures for 1993–94 and 1994–95 include fleet roadworthiness checks. It is not possible to separate out figures for roadside checks only.

Note:

The figures shown exclude emissions-only checks on HGV motor vehicles but include checks on foreign vehicles.

Traffic enforcement examinations

Vehicle category	*HGV*	*PSV*
2002–03	106,587	13,900
2001–02	108,917	11,330
2000–01	132,784	15,994
1999–2000	158,067	18,513
1998–99	161,268	18,183
1997–98	192,573	30,436
1996–97	214,924	30435
1995–96	248,674	38,306
1994–95	266,185	38,654
1993–94	307,835	36,981

Note:

The figures include checks on foreign vehicles

Over recent years, VOSA has sought to improve its targeting regime in order to ensure that those who tend to comply with legal requirements are less likely to be stopped and checked, and those who are pre-disposed to ignore legal requirements are more likely to be detected. Greater effort now goes into researching, targeting and stopping/investigating vehicles selectively and this is reflected in the above trend (figures).

Maritime Security

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what new security measures have been introduced by *(a)* Government and *(b)* Transec on (i) British ports and (ii) British ships in preparation for the implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code; [163584]

(2) how Transec has been working to prepare *(a)* ports and *(b)* United Kingdom flagged ships for the implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code on 1 July; [163585]

(3) if he will make a statement on the preparedness of British *(a)* ships and *(b)* ports for the implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code. [163623]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department for Transport's Transport Security Directorate (TRANSEC) in conjunction with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) are responsible for introducing the ISPS Code requirements. Operationally TRANSEC is responsible for UK ports and passenger shipping, and MCA is responsible for non-passenger shipping, under a policy framework set by TRANSEC.

The UK has developed five port facility Protection Categories, based on traffic type, such as Passenger, Container Ro-Ro, Other Bulk Cargo, and has developed category specific security measures which are designed to reduce any existing vulnerabilities at these port facilities.

All of the major UK ports including the passenger operations have been assessed and Port Facility Security Assessment (PFSA) Reports have been prepared. Along with the individual PFSA reports, industry has been provided with category specific Port Facility Security Instructions and Security Standards. These will form the basis of their Port Facility Security Plans. A Port Facility Security Plan template has also been made available to assist companies prepare their plans, which are then submitted for approval.

Clear guidelines and deadlines have been issued to industry to submit their Ship Security Plans to TRANSEC for passenger ships, and the MCA for non-passenger ships, for examination and approval. Once a plan has been approved, it must be verified on board the ship prior to issuing an International Ship Security Certificate (ISSC).

It is up to individual port facilities and flag vessels to comply with the programme for submission we have set out. TRANSEC and MCA staff are already approving Port Facility Security Plans and issuing International Ship Security Certificates and the Government expect all UK port facilities and flagged ships will comply with the required ISPS standards by the deadline.

Rail Services (Kent)

Jonathan Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the future demand on rail travel in the Kent Thames Gateway during the expected period of the Integrated Kent Franchise. [162502]

Mr. McNulty: The Department and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are in close contact on this issue. The impact of future rail demand in the Thames Gateway area has been taken into account in the Integrated Kent Franchise consultation process.

Port Security

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what percentage of *(a)* ships and *(b)* containers are subject to security scanning upon their arrival in British ports; [163581]

(2) what measures he has taken since 11 September 2001 to improve the level of security scanning of *(a)* ships and *(b)* container freight upon their arrival in British ports; [163582]

(3) what percentage of *(a)* ships and *(b)* containers are scanned for harmful material upon arrival in Britain at (i) major and (ii) minor ports. [163583]

Mr. Jamieson: As the hon. Member will understand, it is not practice to disclose details of security matters.

Wembley Park Tube Station

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will enter into discussions with Chiltern Railways about its capacity to provide extra rail services in Brent and North West London during the essential engineering work to be carried out to the Jubilee and Metropolitan lines as part of the upgrade of Wembley Park tube station; [164682]

(2) whether the level of co-operation offered by Chiltern Railways to *(a)* Transport for London and *(b)* London Underground to maintain capacity during closures caused by essential engineering works will have an impact on the renewal of its licence to operate as a train company; [164689]

(3) what statutory responsibilities Chiltern Railways has to co-operate with *(a)* London Underground Limited, *(b)* Transport for London and *(c)* Tube lines in their efforts to maintain rail capacity during the essential engineering work to be carried out to the Jubilee and Metropolitan lines as part of the upgrade of Wembley Park tube station. [164690]

Mr. McNulty: Chiltern Railways has no statutory obligation to provide service cover for the London Underground but are co-operating with Transport for London (TFL) and London Underground Limited (LUL). They have agreed with TfL to run longer trains on the Marylebone-Harrow-Aylesbury route over the weekends 11/12 and 19/20 June to pick up passengers displaced by the works to the Jubilee and Metropolitan lines as part of the upgrade of Wembley Park tube station.

TREASURY

BACS

Brian White: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress his Department has made to manage the changeover from the Bank Automated Clearing System to the new BACSTEL-IP system for electronic payments. [164323]

Ruth Kelly: The Office of HM Paymaster General, which provides a banking service to public sector bodies, has issued guidance to all its customers on the implications and importance of preparing for the migration, which must be completed by December 2005. This guidance is being re-inforced through regional presentations to OPG customers.

HM Treasury is presently planning its own transition to BACSTEL-IP.

Inland Revenue has already taken steps to review and replace its BACSTEL links before the December 2005 deadline. This will involve either the replacement of BACSTEL kit or the transfer of payments to non-BACSTEL links.

HM Customs and Excise has been aware for some time of the BACSTEL-IP changes and has already had preliminary meetings with BACS, its sponsoring bank (Bank of England), its current BACS software supplier and various Technical Division representatives.

National Savings and Investments has undertaken and completed the assessment of the impact and cost of moving to the new BACSTEL-IP system and has agreed a suitable solution that will be quick and easy to implement. NS&I plan to be 'live' by August 2004.

Emigration

Mr. Forth: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* emigrants left and *(b)* immigrants entered the UK in each year since 2000. [163053]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr Eric Forth, dated 31 March 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reply to your request for information on migration into the UK, and out of the UK, for each year since 2000. (163053)

The most recent year for which data are available is 2002. The attached table shows in-migration, out-migration and net migration for the UK, for the years 2000–2002. The table shows migration by citizenship, with British citizens and non-British citizens shown separately.

Total international migration[1] : citizenship time series 2002–2002—United Kingdom

Thousand

	All citizenships	*British*	*Non-British*	*European Union[2]*	*Commonwealth*		*Other foreign[4]*
					Old[3]	*New*	
Inflow to UK:							
2000	483.4	104.1	379.3	63.1	57.2	90.9	168.1
2001	479.6	106.3	373.3	60.4	67.4	83.9	161.6
2002	512.8	94.6	418.2	62.8	65.6	92.9	196.8
Outflow from UK:							
2000	320.7	161.1	159.6	57.0	32.2	14.9	55.5
2001	307.7	159.2	148.5	49.1	32.1	18.6	48.6
2002	359.4	185.7	173.7	51.7	42.3	15.8	63.9
Balance:							
2000	+162.8	-57.0	+219.7	+6.1	+25.0	+76.0	+112.6
2001	+171.8	-53.0	+224.8	+11.2	+35.2	+65.4	+113.0
2002	+153.4	-91.1	+244.5	+11.1	+23.4	+77.1	+132.9

[1] Based mainly on data from the International Passenger Survey. Includes adjustments for (1) those whose intended length of stay changes so that their migrant status changes; (2) asylum seekers and their dependants not identified by the IPS; and (3) flows between the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

[2] Figures for all years show EU as it was constituted on 1 January 1995.

[3] Includes estimates of South African citizenship for all years.

[4] Figures for all years include Hong Kong.

Lyons Report

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether the upfront costs of relocation of Government offices will be included as a capital items within the Government's spending rules; [164726]

(2) when considering relocation options, what is the maximum permitted payback period for an investment to be approved; [164734]

(3) what measures of financial return are used to assess the financial viability of any relocation proposal made in the Lyons Report. [164735]

(4) what proportion of the jobs recommended to be dispersed by the Lyons Report are *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time. [164749]

Mr. Boateng: This is a matter for departments' detailed business planning which they will be taking forward as part of the 2004 Spending Review.

Multi-occupancy Households

Mr. Edward Leigh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in England and Wales contain two or more persons, excluding students, who do not see themselves as a couple, according to the 2001 Census; how many people are in such households; how many people there are in such households where both are pensioners; and how many people in such households he estimates are related to each other. [163071]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Dennis Roberts to Mr. Edward Leigh, dated 31 March 2004:

The National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales has been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many households in England and Wales contain two or more persons, excluding students, who do not see themselves as a couple, according to the 2001 Census; how many people are in such households; how many people there are in such households where both are pensioners; and how many people in such households are related to each other. I am replying in his absence.

There were 1,763,170 such households in England and Wales containing 4,616,558 residents. Of these 4,616,558 residents, 183,775 were pensioners living in "All Pensioner" households. This is based on households where none of the residents recorded themselves as part of either a married or a cohabiting couple.

These figures supplied are from a special extract taken from the 2001 Census database.

Information on how many people in such households are related to each other is not currently available from the 2001 Census for England and Wales. ONS expects to be able to derive and publish this information later in the year.

National Insurance Fund

Mr. Denham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his policy to reduce the surplus on the National Insurance Fund; and if he will make a statement. [164116]

Dawn Primarolo: The National Insurance Fund provides security for state retirement pensions and other contributory benefits, and the Government are determined to continue managing it prudently.

PFI

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the *(a)* current and *(b)* future cost to public funds of each existing (i) private finance initiative and (ii) public private partnership project. [163828]

Mr. Boateng *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* The projected aggregate future payments from public funds for existing PFI projects, are set out in Table C19 'Estimated payments under PFI contracts—April 2004 (signed deals)' in the Financial Statement and BudgetReport (FSBR) 2004. http://www.hmtreasury.gov.uk/media//1CE4C/bud04_chc_312.pdf

Figures on current and future payments for individual existing PFI projects are recorded in individual departmental accounts.

Figures on current and future costs of Public Private Partnerships are recorded in individual departmental accounts.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) in what proportion of refinanced early private finance initiative projects the Office of Government Commerce has secured its target share of 30 per cent. refinancing gains; what proportion of deals signed since July 2002 contract for a 50/50 share of refinancing gains; and how many and what proportion of refinanced deals have applied the Office of Government Commerce application notes recommended discount rate when measuring and sharing refinancing benefits; [163925]

(2) how many and what proportion of private finance initiative contracts have been refinanced; and if he will list by Department *(a)* the name, date and capital value of each, *(b)* the expected shareholder returns when the contract was let, *(c)* the increase in returns from refinancing before payment of refinancing gains to the procuring authority, *(d)* the refinancing gains paid to the procuring authority, *(e)* the expected shareholder returns after sharing refinancing gains and *(f)* the increase in cash terms in the processing authority's maximum termination liability. [163926]

Mr. Boateng: The Government monitor the implementation of the Refinancing Code as part of their wider commitment to safeguard value for money for the taxpayer. Departments and other public bodies are encouraged to make full use of the Refinancing Taskforce, which has been established as a centre of expert advice to assist departments on refinancing issues and transactions.

Ten of the 11 private finance initiative projects refinanced after the introduction of the Voluntary Code of Conduct on 30 September 2002 achieved a gain share of 30 per cent. or more for the authority. The revised Standardisation of PFI Contracts (SOPC) came into effect on 30 June 2002 and all projects signed since have been required to provide for a 50/50 share of refinancing gains between authority and contractor.

Thirty-nine private finance initiative projects have been refinanced. This accounts for less than 7 per cent. of the total number of PFI projects that have reached Financial Close. The information requested in respect of; *(a)* the name, date and capital value of each project

and *(d)* the refinancing gains paid to the procuring authority are listed as follows where available. The information requested in respect of; *(b)* the expected shareholder returns when the contract was let, *(c)* the increase in returns from refinancing before payment of refinancing gains to the procuring authority, *(e)* the expected shareholder returns after sharing refinancing gains and *(f)* the increase in cash terms in the processing authority's maximum termination liability is not held centrally.

Project name	*Sponsor Department*	*Funding value (£ million)*	*Date refinanced*	*Total refinancing gain (£ million)*	*Net refinancing share (percentage)*	*Refinancing share (£ million)*
Projects refinanced prior to the entry of the Voluntary Code of Conduct						
A69 Carlisle to Newcastle DBFO	DfT	9	1 June 1996	—	[1]100	—
Colfox School	DFES	15.6	1 June 1999	1.60	25.0	0.40
Royal Armouries Museum—Refinancing	DCMS	42	1 July 1999	—	0.0	—
Altcourse (Fazackerley) Prison	HO Prison Service	88	1 November 1999	10.75	9.3	1.00
Ashfield (Pucklechurch) Prison	HO Prison Service	30.7	1 January 2000	1.54	0.0	—
Dovegate (Marchington) Prison	HO Prison Service	64	1 January 2000	3.20	0.0	—
Hassockfield (Meadomsley) STC	HO	10	1 January 2000	0.50	0.0	—
Kilmarnock Prison	Scottish Executive	32	1 January 2000	1.60	0.0	—
Lowdham Grange Prison	HO Prison Service	32	1 January 2000	1.60	0.0	—
Sussex Weald and Downs NHST—Graylingwell Hosp. Reprovision—Chichester	DoH	27	1 February 2001	—	[1]100.0	—
A19 Dishforth to Tyne Tunnel DBFO	DfT	29	1 March 2001	4.55	33.0	1.50
"Heart of the City" Offices	ODPM	20	1 April 2001	1.00	0.0	—
Parc (Bridgend) Prison	HO Prison Service	74	1 May 2001	1.40	0.0	—
Balfron School	Scottish Executive	16.5	1 June 2001	0.83	5.0	0.04
Dundee Ninewells Psychiatric Services	Scottish Executive	10	1 June 2001	0.50	30.0	0.15
Mearns Primary and St. Ninian's High School	Scottish Executive	12.5	1 June 2001	0.63	50.0	0.31
Newcastle Estate Development	Inland Revenue	163.8	1 June 2001	14.17	60.0	8.50
HM Customs and Excise—IT Infrastructure PFI	C and E	20	1 July 2001	1.00	0.0	—
M1-A1 Link Road (Lofthouse to Bramham)	DfT	214	1 September 2001	10.70	0.0	—
M40 Junctions 1 to 15	DfT	130	1 October 2001	5.48	31.0	1.70
Antarctic Survey Ship	DTI	22	31 December 2001	1.10	0.0	—
North Wiltshire DC—Property Rationalisation	ODPM	7	1 January 2002	0.35	5.0	0.02
Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge	DEFRA	21	1 February 2002	0.80	50.0	0.40
Calderdale Hospital	DoH	65.6	1 May 2002	12.00	30.0	3.60
Joint Services Command and Staff College	MOD	93	1 June 2002	1.27	30.0	0.38
Manchester Inland Revenue Accommodation Project	Inland Revenue	32	1 July 2002	1.60	0.0	—
A30/A35 Exeter to Bere Regis DBFO	DfT	75	1 September 2002	3.75	0.0	—
A50/A564 Stoke-Derby Link	DfT	21	1 September 2002	1.05	0.0	—
Projects refinanced after the entry of the Voluntary Code of Conduct						
Second Severn Crossing	DfT (Highways)	331	31 December 2002	63.00	40.0	25.00
Bute Avenue	Wales	45	12 February 2003	8.00	30.0	2.50
Dartford and Gravesham Hospital NHS Trust	DoH	122	25 March 2003	33.13	35.2	11.66
Debden Park School	DFES	17.7	31 March 2003	1.34	30.0	0.40
Hillingdon—Barnhill School	DFES	18.8	1 May 2003	0.94	0.0	—
Cardinal Heenan (VA) School	DFES	7.7	20 May 2003	0.98	50.0	0.49
Central Scotland Family Quarters—Bannockburn	MOD	25	10 June 2003	6.07	30.0	1.82
Haringey Schools	DFES	62.5	11 September 2003	3.00	30.0	0.9
Bridlington Schools	DFES	26	10 September 2003	1.00	30.0	0.30
Brent Jews Free School	DFES	9	22 September 2003	0.80	30.0	0.25
Norwich and Norfolk Health Care NHS Trust	DoH	335	18 December 2003	90.00	32.0	29.10

[1] The benefit of the refinancing gains was transferred to the Procuring Authority at the outset of the project through a reduction in the project costs to match the forecasted level of refinancing gains.

Public Administration Costs

Mr. Flight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will publish the figures used to calculate Chart 6.1, Administration costs as a proportion of total spending, on page 135 of the Economic and Fiscal Strategy Report and Financial Statement and Budget Report 2004; [163588]

(2) what the cost of Government administration has been in each financial year since 1995–96; and what proportion of total spending by Government Departments in each year those figures represent. [163599]

Mr. Boateng: For 1986–87 to 2005–06, the data that underpins Chart 6.1 in the Economic and Fiscal Strategy Report has been published in Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA) 1988–89 to 2003–04, copies of which are in the Library.

For financial years 2006–07 and 2007–08, the data that underpins Chart 6.1 reflects announcements on administration costs and Total Managed Expenditure made in Budget 2004.

Public Sector Pay

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average public sector salary is in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* London, *(c)* the South East, *(d)* Hampshire, *(e)* the South West and *(f)* Wales. [164742]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Hoban, dated 31 March 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking what the average public sector salary is in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* London, *(c)* the South East, *(d)* Hampshire, *(e)* the South West and *(f)* Wales.

Average earnings are estimated from the 2003 New Earnings Survey (NES) and are shown in the attached table. These are provided for full-time employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period. This is the standard definition used for NES tables. The NES does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work. Area figures are provided according to the location of workplaces.

The NES, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in Great Britain. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes, but because of its sampling frame, it has difficulty capturing data on people with very low pay. It is therefore likely to under-represent relatively low paid staff earning below the tax threshold.

The New Earnings Survey publication criteria ensures that all estimates are undisclosive and of reliable quality. As with any statistical sample survey, estimates from the NES are subject to sampling error.

Average gross weekly (£) earnings in the public sector in six areas, as specified—April 2003

Area	*Average weekly earnings (£)*
London	559.9
South East (excluding London)	477.3
South West	451.9
Wales	441.5
Hampshire	495.4
UK	465.8

Note:
1. Estimates for London, the South East and the South West are for Government Office Regions.
2. Employees are generally classified to the public sector according the classification of their employer in the Interdepartmental Business Register (IDBR).

Source:
New Earnings Survey, April 2003

Corporation Tax

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what additional revenue the Treasury will receive as a result of the changes to small company taxation on dividends proposed to take effect in 2004; [151773]

Mr. Flook: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the revenue to be raised in each of the next two financial years from the 19 per cent. minimum rate of corporation tax on distributed profits; and if he will use this revenue to support small businesses; [164562]

Dawn Primarolo: The estimated yield from the 19 per cent. minimum rate of corporation tax on distributed profits for the next three financial years is given in Table A1 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report. Alongside the revenue raised by the measure, unincorporated businesses have benefited from lower tax rates by incorporating. Estimates of the impact of the measure, taking into account these savings, are shown in footnote 1 to Table A1.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Asylum Cases (Legal Assistance)

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was paid in legal assistance in asylum cases in 2003. [164974]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Commission does not differentiate asylum from wider immigration cases and the amount paid by the Commission is calculated by financial year. The total legal aid expenditure for immigration and asylum cases for 2002–03 was £176.2 million. A figure for 2003–04 will not be finalised until after the year-end.

Commercial and Admiralty Courts

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on progress with the programme to provide the Commercial and Admiralty Courts with more suitable accommodation. [164626]

Mr. Leslie: There is widespread support for a new building for the Commercial Court, and we are committed to finding a way to achieve this. I am aware of the contribution that a successful Commercial Court, and our legal system more generally, provides to the City, and therefore the country and economy as a whole.

The scoping work to produce an Outline Business Case (OBC) to create a new building for the Commercial Court has been completed by officials in my Department.

Further consideration of the options, costs and benefits are being made, and further announcements will be made in due course.

D. W. Stock

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Legal Services Commission received details of the case relating to a constituent, D. W. Stock; and what the cost to public funds of dealing with the case has been. [164674]

Mr. Lammy: D. W. Stock first applied for public funding on 3 March 2000. A subsequent application for funding was refused, and the appeal against that refusal was delayed. Mr. Stock made an ex gratia application for compensation on 18 May 2002. The cost to public funds of dealing with the case is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Legal Services Commission

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the estimated cost to the Legal Services Commission is of funding Mr. Hamza's appeal to the Special Immigration Appeals Commission. [163845]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Commission has not to date granted funding to Mr. Hamza for an appeal to the Special Immigration Appeals Commission. However, he has a pending appeal to the Funding Review Committee. Disclosure of details relating to Mr. Hamza's case while it is ongoing would constitute a breach of confidentiality.

Magistrates Courts

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many appeals against closure of magistrates courts were lodged in each year since 1997 to date; and how many of these succeeded in each year. [163934]

Mr. Leslie: The number of successful appeals against closure decided by Ministers is as follows:

1997: 2 out of 17;

1998: 1 out of 26;

1999: 1 out of 9;

2000: 1 out of 11;

2001: none out of 12;

2002: none out of 2;

2003: 5 out of 15;

and in 2004 there have been three successful appeals so far and none dismissed. There are two appeals still outstanding.

Small Claims

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans he has to simplify procedures in the small claims track. [164439]

Mr. Lammy: I refer my hon. and learned Friend to my reply on 27 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 49W.

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the socio-economic origins of claimants and defendants in actions in the small claims track. [164457]

Mr. Lammy: The Department has conducted several research projects on the small claims track but because of methodological difficulties none has addressed the socio-economic origins of claimants and defendants.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Amphetamines

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) pursuant to the oral answer of 22 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 551, on amphetamines, what assessment he has made of *(a)* trends in the level of use of methamphetamine hydrochloride and *(b)* the effects of those trends; [163929]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effects of *(a)* methamphetamine hydrochloride and other amphetamines and *(b)* cocaine and crack cocaine on the (i) behaviour, (ii) psychosis and (iii) addiction of individuals when taking these drugs and on the length of time that uncharacteristic drug-induced behaviour continues while the drug remains in an individual's system; [163930]

(3) what assessment he has made of the *(a)* levels and *(b)* effects of use of (i) methamphetamine, (ii) laevoamphetamine and (iii) dextroamphetamine; [163931]

(4) what assessment he has made of the extent to which amphetamine use leads to violent and aggressive behaviour. [163932]

Caroline Flint: The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs keeps the situation in respect of all controlled drugs under review. Methylamphetamine was considered at the ACMD's Technical Committee meeting on 11 March. Evidence given at the meeting suggested that the level of methylamphetamine use in the UK at present is not a significant problem, and there is no evidence to suggest it is likely to become one in the foreseeable future. The Advisory Council is to further consider the matter at its meeting on 1 April.

It was highlighted at the meeting on 11 March that methylamphetamine is a dependent inducing drug that is stronger than normal amphetamine. It has links with the development of mental illness, with users sometimes showing signs of violence, paranoia and anxiety. The effects of the drug last longer than cocaine or crack. The effects of amphetamine are similar to, but generally less severe than for methylamphetamine. Cocaine is a very dependence-inducing drug. Its harms include chest pains which can lead to potentially fatal heart problems. Crack has the same short-lived effects as cocaine but is much stronger. Crack is very addictive and chronic users are likely to suffer from mood swings, paranoia, aggression and mental illnesses.

The level of methylamphetamine use in the United Kingdom is not at present significant. In 2003 only 415 grams of methylamphetamine was seized by the police. Laevoamphetamine and dextroamphetamine are two isomers that are used to make amphetamine and are not misused separately. According to the British Crime Survey 2002–03, 1.6 per cent. of the population in England and Wales in the 16 to 59 age group have used amphetamine in the last 12 months.

No specific assessment has been carried out of the extent to which amphetamine use leads to violent and aggressive behaviour. The Advisory Council last formally considered amphetamine in November 1995. As stated above, the Advisory Council's Technical Committee considered the harms of methylamphetamine at its meeting on 11 March.

Animal Experiments

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the efficacy of animal experiments; [163903]

Caroline Flint: The Home Office has not commissioned or evaluated any formal research on the efficacy of animal experiments. Animal experiments must be judged to be potentially efficacious in order to be licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, which requires that animals may only be used in scientific procedures where such use is fully justified, where the likely benefits outweigh the costs to the animals involved, and where the procedures are most likely to produce satisfactory results. Also, under the conditions attached to their certificates of designation under the 1986 Act, all places that undertake animal experiments are obliged to have an ethical review process, one of the functions of which is to review the efficacy and conduct of the work undertaken under licence at the establishment. In addition, research councils and charities fund many research projects carried out under the 1986 Act and the work done is reported to and evaluated by them. Other work is funded by pharmaceutical companies and is subject to internal scrutiny within those companies. The safety and efficacy testing needed before people are exposed to new drugs is evaluated by the relevant regulators.

Child Abuse

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on plans to establish regional centres dedicated to high technology investigation of on-line child abuse; [158986]

(2) if he will make a statement on the level of resources available to gather forensic evidence on on-line child abusers; [158990]

(3) if he will list the police forces in England and Wales which do not specialise in combating internet child abuse; [158991]

(4) what funding is available for international co-operation to protect children whose images have been trafficked on-line; [158992]

(5) what discussions he has undertaken with his US counterparts on increasing US detection of internet child pornography crime; [158993]

(6) what percentage of internet child pornography detected in the UK has been hosted on websites in the USA; [158994]

(7) if he will make a statement on the training that police who are not part of specialist units receive on how on-line paedophiles operate. [158995]

Paul Goggins: The deployment of officers to units dealing with child abuse investigations and their training in forensic investigation skills is a matter for individual chief officers. In addition a number of private companies provide forensic examination services which are regularly utilised by law enforcement agencies. There is no centrally aggregated figure of these resources.

In addition to the on-going support for high tech crime, in December 2002 the Home Office provided a one-off payment of £½ million to the Association of Chief Police Officers to support operations to combat child abuse on the internet. This money has been used in part to provide relevant hardware and software, and also to train 86 individuals within forces in basic forensic analysis this financial year. The Home Office is currently producing tactical guidance for managers of computer crime units within forces which will include advice on running these units and practical guidance on procedures and tools for forensic analysis.

Every police force in England and Wales has a computer crime unit and a child protection/child abuse investigation team which has expertise in the recovery of forensic evidence and network investigation. These skills are utilised in on-line child abuse investigations. Whilst the degree of expertise and training within these units will vary from force to force, all forces have specialists in dealing with such cases.

With regard to training police who are not part of specialist units, there is a module included in the probationary training for all new police officers covering the internet and new technology to raise their awareness of how paedophiles and other criminals can exploit this technology. Centrex are also developing an on-line training package for existing officers. I have also made available £100,000 to facilitate the development of a joint awareness package covering how children and those who exploit them use these technologies. This package will be aimed at all professionals with a role in child protection, including social workers, police and probation officers.

A major consultation on the future of police reform was launched on 4 November 2003 entitled 'Policing: Building Safer Communities Together'. This raised a number of questions including whether there is a need for larger strategic forces, and specialised 'lead' forces to tackle certain issues, such as on-line paedophilia. Responses to the consultation paper are now being considered and we will publish firmer proposals for consultation later this year in relation to these issues.

I understand from figures provided by the Internet Watch Foundation that from the images reported to them in 2003, 55 per cent. of child abuse content is believed to be hosted in the United States. My right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary, has recently met the Deputy Attorney General and has discussed how we can co-operate to close down illegal sites that are based in the US. There will be a UK/USA working group to take this issue forward bilaterally.

All G8 countries, including the UK and US, adopted a strategy on Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation on the internet in October 2002. The aim of the strategy is to protect children from sexual exploitation on the internet and help make cyberspace a safer environment for all internet users.

A problem for all law enforcement agencies is the identification of children featured in child abuse images. As part of this G8 strategy the UK is leading the development of an international (not restricted to G8 countries) Child Image Database, housed at Interpol. It aims to act as a global repository of images of child

abuse with the capacity to carry out automated analysis. It will be a significant tool for international law enforcement contributing to the identification of victims and offenders and analysis of images.

In the UK, where the Internet Watch Foundation discover that child abuse material is produced or hosted overseas, arrangements exist for notifying the relevant law enforcement agency and Internet Service Provider (ISP) concerned.

There are also a variety of funding mechanisms to assist in furthering international co-operation such as through the provision of equipment and training to overseas law enforcement by UK agencies, and the provision of specialist training courses. For example the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and National Crime Squad are hosting a second conference for international law enforcement experts later this month.

Courts (Remand and Tagging)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the effects of courts' *(a)* secure remand and *(b)* tagging powers. [159806]

Paul Goggins: Between April 2002 and January 2004 11,263 juveniles aged 12 to 17 received secure remands and 5,713 juveniles aged 12 to 16 were bailed with a tagging requirement. Tagging has only been available for 17 year olds since 5 January 2004 and we do not yet have figures.

Secure remand powers are intended for young people charged with the most serious and persistent offending. Youth Offending Teams' recommendations to courts reflect this approach. In addition, remand review schemes operate to identify any juveniles who would be more suitable for conditional bail on their next court appearance.

Tagging for juveniles is currently being evaluated and the findings are due to be published shortly.

Criminal Justice (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to ensure that targets for improving the performance of the Criminal Justice System in Greater London are met. [163075]

Paul Goggins: The London Criminal Justice Board is one of 42 Local Criminal Justice Boards tasked with improving the performance of the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

The local boards are responsible for delivery of the CJS Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets. Their key priorities are to improve the delivery of justice by increasing the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice and to improve the level of public confidence in the CJS. Additionally they have targets to ensure the Persistent Young Offender pledge is met and where applicable, including in London, they have a target to reduce street crime.

Each local board has set out in delivery plans what their precise targets are and how they intend to achieve them. Progress against these plans are monitored and assessed by teams made up from representatives from across the three CJS Departments—Home Office, Department for Constitutional Affairs and Crown Prosecution Service—and appropriate feedback and support is given.

Additionally the National Criminal Justice Board, at its monthly meetings, discusses the performance of local boards and members of the board—Ministers and senior officials—regularly visit local areas to offer support, build good working relationships with board members and challenge boards on poor performance.

London also benefits from having a CJS Ministers Group that works with the board to identify and remove any obstacles to improved performance.

The board recently reviewed its sub-structures and has now set up 28 borough level Criminal Justice Boards that will allow them to focus attention and resources on those areas that most require them.

Drug Testing and Treatment

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 901W, on drug testing and treatment, (1) if he will break down the number of drug treatment and testing orders issued in the York Petty Sessional Area by bench areas; [161774]

(2) what the success rate is of drug treatment and testing orders *(a)* in England, *(b)* in the York Petty Sessional Area and *(c)* in each bench area in the York Petty Sessional Area; [161775]

(3) how many drug treatment and testing orders have been revoked in the York Petty Sessional Area; and what the reasons were for revoking them; [161776]

(4) what the recommended timescale is for moving between the stages of sentence, initial probation appointment, commencement on programme and receiving prescription drugs. [161777]

Paul Goggins: Information relating to the number of Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) made in the York Petty Sessional Area (PSA) broken down by bench areas together with success rates of these orders and the number that have been revoked and reasons for this is not centrally available.

Data provided by probation areas to the National Probation Directorate show that in England and Wales between October 2000 and December 2003 18,397 orders were made. 16 per cent. of these were completed successfully, and 34 per cent. remained on the order. In the same period, 11,750 orders terminated, 24 per cent. of which were for successful completion.

Completion rates of DTTOs do not necessarily show the whole picture in respect of success of these orders. An evaluation of the three DTTO pilots found that, on average, offenders committed 75 per cent. fewer offences while on the order and reduced their spend on drugs by over 90 per cent. A two-year follow-up reconviction study found that there was a significant reduction in the average number of convictions per year in the two years following the order in all three pilot sites.

In respect of DTTOs, the timescales for first contact with the probation service and treatment provider are determined by the Home Office National Standards for the supervision of offenders in the community. These require that the first appointment with the probation area shall be arranged to take place within one working day of the order being made and contact with the treatment provider shall be arranged to take place within two working days of the order.

No recommendation is made in respect of commencement on any specific programme, nor in respect of prescribing substitute drugs; this is determined on an individual basis following assessment and is dependent upon the treatment needs of the offender. Contact, including treatment, across all requirements of the orders is expected to be on five days per week, for a total of 20 hours per week, for the first 13 weeks of the order.

Graffiti

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of those who graffitied were repeat offenders in 2003; and whether common profiles for repeat offenders have been created. [153607]

Paul Goggins: Statistics are not available to indicate how many of offenders who cause graffiti are repeat offenders. The statistics collected centrally do not include the circumstances of the offence, therefore graffiti offences committed cannot be distinguished from other offences of criminal or malicious damage.

Police

Mr. Heath: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of police officers in each police force in England and Wales are *(a)* female and *(b)* from an ethnic minority, broken down by rank. [164215]

Ms Blears: The data for 31 March 2003 are shown in the tables. The March 2004 data will be published in the autumn.

Percentage of minority ethnic officers per force, by rank, as at 31 March 2003: England and Wales

	Minority ethnic ranks as percentage of total		
Police force	*ACPO rank*	*Chief Superintendent*	*Superintendent*
Avon and Somerset	0	0	0
Bedfordshire	0	0	10
Cambridgeshire	0	0	0
Cheshire	0	0	0
Cleveland	0	0	0
Cumbria	0	0	0
Derbyshire	0	0	0
Devon and Cornwall	0	0	0
Dorset	0	0	0
Durham	0	0	0
Essex	0	0	7
Gloucestershire	0	0	0
Greater Manchester	0	0	2
Hampshire	0	0	0
Hertfordshire	0	0	13
Humberside	0	0	0
Kent	0	0	4
Lancashire	0	0	0
Leicestershire	0	0	11
Lincolnshire	0	0	0
London, City of	0	0	0
Merseyside	0	0	7

Percentage of minority ethnic officers per force, by rank, as at 31 March 2003: England and Wales

	Minority ethnic ranks as percentage of total		
Police force	*ACPO rank*	*Chief Superintendent*	*Superintendent*
Metropolitan Police	8	2	3
Norfolk	0	0	0
Northamptonshire	0	0	0
Northumbria	0	0	3
North Yorkshire	0	0	17
Nottinghamshire	0	29	0
South Yorkshire	0	0	0
Staffordshire	0	0	0
Suffolk	0	0	0
Surrey	0	0	0
Sussex	0	0	0
Thames Valley	0	0	6
Warwickshire	0	0	13
West Mercia	0	0	0
West Midlands	0	0	0
West Yorkshire	0	0	0
Wiltshire	0	0	0
Dyfed-Powys	0	0	17
Gwent	0	0	0
North Wales	0	0	0
South Wales	0	13	0
Total of all 43 forces	2	1	2
NCS	0	0	0
National Crime Intelligence Service (NCIS)	0	0	0
Central Service secondments	0	4	3
British Transport Police	0	0	0
Total other services	0	2	1
Total police service strength	1	1	2
Total police service strength (excluding BTP)	1	1	2

	Minority ethnic ranks as percentage of total			
Police force	*Chief Inspector*	*Inspector*	*Sergeant*	*Constable*
Avon and Somerset	0	1	1	2
Bedfordshire	0	2	3	5
Cambridgeshire	0	2	3	3
Cheshire	0	0	0	1
Cleveland	0	1	3	1
Cumbria	0	4	0	0
Derbyshire	9	4	2	3
Devon and Cornwall	0	0	0	1
Dorset	0	2	1	1
Durham	0	0	1	2
Essex	2	2	1	2
Gloucestershire	0	2	2	1
Greater Manchester	2	2	3	3
Hampshire	0	2	1	1
Hertfordshire	4	1	2	2
Humberside	0	2	1	1
Kent	0	0	1	1
Lancashire	0	1	2	3
Leicestershire	5	4	4	5
Lincolnshire	0	1	2	1
London, City of	6	2	2	4
Merseyside	2	1	1	2
Metropolitan Police	2	3	3	6
Norfolk	4	1	0	1
Northamptonshire	11	4	2	3
Northumbria	0	0	1	1
North Yorkshire	7	0	1	1
Nottinghamshire	7	2	2	3
South Yorkshire	0	2	3	3
Staffordshire	0	0	1	2
Suffolk	0	0	1	3
Surrey	0	2	0	3
Sussex	2	1	1	1
Thames Valley	0	3	2	3
Warwickshire	8	0	4	3
West Mercia	3	1	2	1
West Midlands	0	5	5	6
West Yorkshire	2	2	3	3
Wiltshire	0	0	1	1
Dyfed-Powys	0	0	0	1
Gwent	0	0	0	2

Police force	Minority ethnic ranks as percentage of total: Chief Inspector	Inspector	Sergeant	Constable
North Wales	0	0	1	0
South Wales	0	2	0	2
Total of all 43 forces	2	2	2	3
NCS	5	0	3	2
National Crime Intelligence Service (NCIS)	0	0	4	3
Central Service secondments	3	3	0	4
British Transport Police	3	2	3	4
Total other services	3	2	3	3
Total police service strength	2	2	2	3
Total police service strength (excluding BTP)	2	2	2	3

Note:

This and other tables contain full-time equivalent figures that have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Because of rounding, there may be an apparent discrepancy between totals and the sums of the constituent items.

Percentage of females per force by ranks as at 31 March 2003: England and Wales

Police force	Percentage ACPO ranks female	Percentage Chief Superintendents female	Percentage Superintendents female
Avon and Somerset	0	0	20
Bedfordshire	0	0	30
Cambridgeshire	0	0	0
Cheshire	0	0	14
Cleveland	0	0	9
Cumbria	33	0	0
Derbyshire	0	14	13
Devon and Cornwall	25	0	9
Dorset	33	0	10
Durham	0	0	0
Essex	0	14	21
Gloucestershire	0	0	22
Greater Manchester	0	5	12
Hampshire	0	0	12
Hertfordshire	0	20	6
Humberside	0	0	0
Kent	0	0	12
Lancashire	25	13	15
Leicestershire	25	0	22
Lincolnshire	0	33	0
London, City of	0	0	0
Merseyside	0	0	7
Metropolitan Police	14	4	7
Norfolk	0	0	0
Northamptonshire	0	0	0
Northumbria	0	0	12
North Yorkshire	33	17	0
Nottinghamshire	0	0	6
South Yorkshire	0	15	4
Staffordshire	0	0	15
Suffolk	33	0	0
Surrey	0	0	20
Sussex	0	6	5
Thames Valley	40	20	6
Warwickshire	0	0	13
West Mercia	33	9	9
West Midlands	0	15	0
West Yorkshire	0	18	7
Wiltshire	50	0	13
Dyfed-Powys	0	0	0
Gwent	0	20	0
North Wales	0	0	9
South Wales	0	0	9
Total of all 43 forces	8	6	9
NCS	0	0	6
National Crime Intelligence Service (NCIS)	0	0	0
Central Service secondments	0	0	8
British Transport Police	0	0	0
Total other services	0	0	5
Total police service strength	7	6	8
Total police service strength (excluding BTP)	8	6	9

Police force	Percentage Chief Inspector female	Percentage Inspector female	Percentage Sergeant female	Percentage Constable female
Avon and Somerset	21	6	10	18
Bedfordshire	21	7	13	23
Cambridgeshire	8	4	11	20
Cheshire	3	12	14	21
Cleveland	0	7	10	19
Cumbria	8	8	8	25
Derbyshire	0	6	8	21
Devon and Cornwall	9	11	11	21
Dorset	4	8	11	20
Durham	6	9	10	24
Essex	5	9	12	22
Gloucestershire	5	3	12	24
Greater Manchester	13	11	14	21
Hampshire	7	11	15	23
Hertfordshire	11	14	14	24
Humberside	13	7	8	23
Kent	20	11	13	22
Lancashire	12	10	13	22
Leicestershire	15	5	10	19
Lincolnshire	11	7	9	19
London, City of	13	6	8	20
Merseyside	4	11	12	19
Metropolitan Police	6	7	11	19
Norfolk	16	5	11	19
Northamptonshire	0	7	11	23
Northumbria	9	7	10	20
North Yorkshire	0	3	8	21
Nottinghamshire	14	7	11	19
South Yorkshire	6	8	15	22
Staffordshire	4	6	10	23
Suffolk	6	10	8	23
Surrey	10	12	16	24
Sussex	13	13	13	23
Thames Valley	14	12	12	22
Warwickshire	0	6	7	22
West Mercia	16	9	8	22
West Midlands	14	12	15	27
West Yorkshire	4	9	11	22
Wiltshire	0	7	11	24
Dyfed-Powys	0	4	10	20
Gwent	0	10	5	21
North Wales	4	1	10	21
South Wales	4	8	10	20
Total of all 43 forces	8	9	11	21
NCS	14	9	8	12
National Crime Intelligence Service (NCIS)	4	5	7	17
Central Service secondments	8	12	15	26
British Transport Police	3	8	7	13
Total other services	8	9	9	14
Total police service strength	8	9	11	21
Total police service strength (excluding BTP)	9	9	11	21

Note:

This and other tables contain full-time equivalent figures that have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Because of rounding, there may be an apparent discrepancy between totals and the sums of the constituent items.

Probation Service

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from serving members of the Probation Service in respect of proposals made in the "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" publication, issued in January; and what cost-benefit analysis has been made of the proposals to introduce a purchaser/provider model for the Probation Service. [159939]

Paul Goggins: As of 8 March the Home Office has received, in response to the proposals in "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives", 163 representations from serving members of the National Probation Service or from representative groups working within Probation.

The National Offender Management Service implementation team will consider the specific details, including the costs/benefits of the introduction of a purchaser-provider model across Correctional Services.

Study Visas

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the range of fees payable for visas to study in the UK is; what the average fee payable is; whether higher fees are payable for visas for longer courses; what fees are charged for visa extensions for students who do not complete their courses on time; and if he will make a statement. [164154]

Mr. Mullin: I have been asked to reply.

Students currently pay £36 for a student visa application, irrespective of course length. My right hon. Friend the Minister for Citizenship and Immigration announced the introduction of charging for extensions to stay in the UK on 10 July 2003. The fee for all leave to remain applications including students is £155 with a premium rate of £250 for a same day service.

Wheel Clamping

Kevin Brennan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress in the licensing of wheel clampers. [164161]

Ms Blears: On current plans the Security Industry Authority propose to commence the licensing of wheel clampers towards the end of 2004. Details of the licensing criteria are currently being finalised and are likely to include an identity check, a criminal records check for relevant previous convictions, and a check on the applicant's professional competence to do the job.

SCOTLAND

Parliamentary Questions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many parliamentary questions have been tabled to his Department since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157735]

Mrs. McGuire: 387 parliamentary questions were tabled to the Department from 1 January 2003 to end February 2004, of which 331 were ordinary written and 56 were named day. While records on average processing times are not collected, approximately 75 per cent. of the ordinary written questions were answered within 10 working days. Approximately 65 per cent. of the named day questions were answered by the specific date.

Census

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many same-sex couple households there are in Scotland according to the 2001 Census; [163064]

(2) how many households in Scotland contain two or more persons, excluding students, who do not see themselves as a couple, according to the 2001 Census; how many people there are in such households; how many people are in such households where there are pensioners; and how many people he estimates are in such households who are related to each other. [163065]

Mrs. McGuire: The Census is a devolved matter in Scotland. However, the Registrar General for Scotland, Mr. Duncan Macniven, will write to the hon. Member setting out the information requested.

UK Supreme Court

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what assessment has been made by his Department of the possible change in fees in civil cases in Scotland that may be required following the establishment of the UK Supreme Court; [162940]

(2) what discussions he has had with Scottish Ministers about the possible change in fees in civil cases in Scotland that may be required following the establishment of the UK Supreme Court. [162941]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs is responsible for the establishment of the UK Supreme Court and will continue to discuss all aspects of its administration, including the development of appropriate funding mechanisms, directly with the Scottish Executive and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Iraq

7. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he had in Iraq on support for ethnic groups. [164507]

Hilary Benn: In Baghdad and Basra last week I held discussions on a wide range of issues including those affecting ethnic and religious groups. DFID is not providing assistance in support of any specific groups. DFID aims to promote social and political cohesion by increasing the participation of all Iraqis in the democratic process. DFID recently agreed to establish a £5 million political participation fund to assist towards meeting this objective.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on post-war reconstruction and development in Iraq. [164156]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member to the Written Statement I made to the House on 25 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 66WS, following my visit to Iraq on 22–23 March.

Global Fund

8. **Mr. David Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with European ministers regarding *(a)* the funding and *(b)* the administrative structure of the global fund. [164508]

Hilary Benn: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave earlier.

Zimbabwe

9. **Mr. Liddell-Grainger:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe. [164509]

Hilary Benn: The humanitarian crisis continues to be fuelled by a number of factors including the HIV/AIDS epidemic, Government of Zimbabwe's misguided economic policies, the fast track land programme, and late rains. Up to 8 million Zimbabweans are currently facing food shortages prior to the harvest in April 2004. In addition, the Government of Zimbabwe is increasingly incapable of providing basic social services such as water and sanitation, health and education to its population.

The 2004 harvest may provide less than half the food needs of the population, mainly due to lack of seeds, fertilizer and other agricultural inputs. Even with a change in the political climate, the need for a humanitarian response in Zimbabwe will continue at least until the April 2005 harvest, and possibly beyond.

Primary Education (Girls)

10. **Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress has been made in providing primary education for girls in developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [164510]

Gareth Thomas: According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003–4, girls' enrolments have increased faster than those of boys over the decade to 2000. The Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) for girls' primary enrolment in developing countries has increased from 73.5 per cent. in 1990, to 78.9 per cent. in 2000. The Gender Parity Index (GPI), which measures the ratio between girls' and boys' enrolments rates, has also improved from 0.89 in 1990 to 0.93 in 2000 for primary education, thereby closing the gap in East Asia and the Pacific. Of the 128 countries for which there is data currently available (including developing countries), 81 countries have achieved gender parity in primary education.

In recognition of these statistics, DFID is planning to increase its investment in primary education up to £1 billion over the next five years, and we shall be using the UK Presidencies of the G8 and the EU in 2005 to promote girls' education in Africa.

Cuba

11. **Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State, Department for International Development, if he will restore bilateral aid to Cuba; and if he will make a statement. [164511]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: There has not been a direct UK development programme to Cuba for many years. DFID department does fund a Small Grants Scheme which provides up to £120,000 per annum. The scheme has funded mainly community based, rural projects, working through non government organisations.

There are no plans to initiate a bilateral programme to Cuba.

In July 2003, the EU renewed its common position on Cuba, adopted in December 1996, in light of continued human rights concerns. In line with this Position, the Commission is supporting activities which promote the transition to pluralist democracy and respect for human rights, improve the living standards of the Cuban people, and encourage sustainable economic growth. Currently the European Commission is supporting programmes to a total cost of £10 million. The UK share of these programmes amounts to £1.8 million.

Palestinian Authority

12. **Mr. Khabra:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures he is taking to encourage transparency and accountability in international funding to the Palestinian Authority. [164512]

Hilary Benn: Substantial progress has been made since 2002 in improving the Palestinian Authority's financial management, oversight of public spending and accountability. This has largely been driven by the Palestinian Finance Minister with donor encouragement but without much direct donor assistance. DFID has helped the World Bank carry out a thorough Country Financial Accountability Assessment, which has set out an agenda for further improvements in these areas. The continuing need for donors to support the Palestinian Authority budget directly will ensure that these areas remain under close scrutiny.

Great Lakes

13. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of progress with reconstruction in the Great Lakes region. [164513]

Hilary Benn: The Great Lakes region is emerging from 10 years of conflict, from the 1994 genocide in Rwanda to five years of war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in which appalling human rights violations were committed and which involved, amongst others, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. There has been real progress but expectations of progress in reconstruction must be seen in this context.

The UN Secretary General is assisting preparations for an International Conference to address all the issues arising from reconstruction within the Great Lakes region. The UK fully supports this and will assist as appropriate.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a transitional national government was inaugurated in July last year. It brings together the main warring factions in a power-sharing arrangement. This is a major step towards providing an environment in which reconstruction can take place. Its task is to take the country to the first democratic elections in 30 years in 2005–06. It has also started to reconstruct the country but the challenge and needs are huge given the high levels of poverty, dilapidated infrastructure and continuing ethnic tension.

In Rwanda, in the context of the events in 1994 and the reconciliation challenges posed since, progress towards national reconstruction has been remarkable. In order to deal with the large numbers of accused "génocidaires" in prisons throughout Rwanda, the Rwandan Government introduced a traditional system of community justice to handle the lower categories of crime. The Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (RDRP), which co-ordinates the demobilisation, reinsertion and reintegration of ex-combatants, has led to the demobilisation of 46,000 soldiers since 1997. 2003 saw the culmination of the transition period marked by a referendum on a new Constitution and the election of a new government—the first pluralistic elections in Rwanda's history. Despite mixed reviews from some election observers, the election process represented a significant milestone in Rwanda's democratic evolution.

Uganda has benefited from a period of relative internal stability since 1986. Significant progress has been made in relation to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The HIV/AIDS MDG was achieved in 1996 and Uganda is on track to meet the income poverty MDG, which requires that only 28 per cent. of the population be living in income poverty by 2015. High economic growth has been achieved over a sustained period through sound economic policies, favourable terms of trade, and the positive effects of rural livelihood diversification. The latest data suggests 38 per cent. of the population currently live below the national poverty line compared to 56 per cent. in 1992. Much of this success has been achieved through the implementation of the Government's Poverty Eradication Action Plan. This is now being revised, and will be the basis for future poverty reduction activities. The current conflict in northern Uganda could negatively affect the progress that has been made. We are monitoring this situation closely.

Burundi's three-year transition from civil war to peace and a democratically elected government is due to be complete in November this year. However, conflict still continues between the government and the FNL, the remaining rebel force. The international community, within which the UK is playing an active part, is helping Burundi achieve the goal of a fully comprehensive ceasefire, prepare for elections, and begin the process of demobilising the combatants and reintegrating the bulk of them into civilian life.

DFID fully supports all the countries of the Great Lakes region in their efforts towards reconstruction, with programmes in 2003–04 of £20 million for the DRC, £37 million for Rwanda, £64.5 million for Uganda and £11.6 million for Burundi.

We are also encouraging the normalisation of regional relations. We have facilitated regular dialogue between Rwanda and Uganda. We have urged the governments of Rwanda, Uganda and DRC to work up good neighbourly relations as the basis for national and regional stability. In this respect, we welcome the signing in New York on 25 September 2003 of a Good Neighbourly Pact, which included commitments by the governments that all support for armed groups should end and that there should be no involvement in any illegal exploitation of natural resources of the DRC.

Water and Sanitation

14. **Mr. Cameron:** To ask the Secretary of State, Department for International Development, what representations he has received regarding water and sanitation in the developing world. [164514]

Hilary Benn: As Secretary of State for International Development, I receive regular representations regarding water and sanitation in the developing world. I also correspond with other donors, international organisations and individuals involved in water on a regular basis.

The bulk of the letters were the result of campaigns launched by non-governmental organisations, namely:

WaterAid's "Flush out Poverty" campaign;

Tear Fund's "Whose Earth" campaign;

World Development Movement's "Pull the plug on it" campaign.

The first two campaigns were aimed at ensuring that the UK government lives up to commitments made at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. Correspondents called on the UK government to give greater priority to water and sanitation, and to increase the amount of aid spent on sustainable improvements to water and sanitation for the world's poorest people.

The third campaign asked for the water sector not to be included in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations. Other correspondents have also expressed concern at the role of the private sector.

In addition to corresponding with interested parties, I and my officials meet with groups, including Trade Unions such as UNISON, that have a particular interest in water.

Nigeria

15. **Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State, Department for International Development, if he will make a statement on his Department's work to encourage Nigeria's trade. [164515]

Hilary Benn: DFID is committed to supporting Nigeria in strengthening trade policy dialogue in the context of Nigeria's home grown development strategy, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). Recently, the Federal Government of Nigeria has asked DFID to provide a high level briefing on trade and we are responding to this request. In addition, a programme for the promotion of opportunities for the poor in Commodities and Service Markets would also tackle trade concerns by addressing institutional and structural constraints.

DFID has to date, provided trade policy support under the Africa Trade and Poverty Programme in 2003 to strengthen the capacity of the Nigerian government to engage in the WTO and EU-ACP Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations.

Furthermore, the Agency for International Trade Information and Co-operation, which DFID is funding with six other donor countries, provides support to less developed countries and non-resident members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and to small and under-resourced missions of developing countries, including Nigeria. The Trade and Investment Access

Facility and the Advisory Centre on WTO Law are other support mechanisms co-funded by the UK Government through DFID that are available to less developed countries including Nigeria.

CARDS Project

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the 2002 CARDS project entitled (i) Directorate of Roads in Kosovo and (ii) Pristina to Skopje Road Rehabilitation in Kosovo; [163874]

(2) what his Department's contribution was to the 2002 CARDS projects for *(a)* strategic management support to public utility service providers and *(b)* river gauging and rehabilitation of ash dumps in Mitrovica in Kosovo; and what assessment he has made of the projects; [163868]

(3) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the 2002 CARDS regional co-operation and integration projects on (i) institution building and (ii) integrated border management; [163919]

(4) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the CARDS Institution Building projects (i) on the Implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement in State Institutions in Croatia, (ii) to improve accountability and efficiency in public procurement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, (iii) entitled Introduction of modern practices in the tax and customs administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina and (iv) entitled Support for procurement competition and statistics in Albania that were financed by EU development assistance in 2002; [163937]

(5) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the 2002 CARDS project on the Nikola Tesla A3 thermal power plant in Serbia; [163997]

(6) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the 2002 CARDS projects (i) for local community development in Albania, (ii) for transport sector investment capacity-building measures in Serbia and (iii) for the reconstruction of the Sloboda Bridge in Serbia; [163869]

(7) what his Department's contribution was to the 2002 CARDS projects *(a)* for the return of refugees and displaced persons to (i) Bosnia and Herzegovina and (ii) Croatia, *(b)* to provide support to civil society and to strengthen non-governmental organisations in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, *(c)* to provide support to environmental NGOs in Croatia, *(d)* to develop civil society and NGO capacity in Albania, *(e)* to assist in institutional capacity-building to strengthen environmental protection in Serbia and *(f)* for sewerage and waste water feasibility and treatment in Montenegro; and what assessment he has made of each project; [163910]

(8) what assessment he has made of the 2002 CARDS projects on *(a)* technical assistance to the electricity sector and emergency rehabilitation of electricity distribution systems in Montenegro, *(b)* for an energy efficiency agency and an energy regulatory agency in Serbia and *(c)* for generation, transmission and consultancy in respect of energy in Serbia; [163911]

(9) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the 2002 CARDS projects (i) on vocational education and training in Serbia, (ii) on vocational training and educational mobility in Croatia, (iii) to support vocational education and training reform in Albania and (iv) for agricultural and agro-processing credit, the strengthening of public veterinary services and agricultural statistics and the Policy Advisory Unit in Kosovo; [163870]

(10) what his Department's contribution was to the 2002 CARDS projects for *(a)* the development of a comprehensive environmental regulatory framework, *(b)* water resources management and *(c)* solid waste management in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and what assessment he has made of the projects; [163999]

(11) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the 2002 CARDS Tempus projects in (i) Bosnia and Herzegovina, (ii) Albania, (iii) Croatia, (iv) Montenegro, (v) Serbia and (vi) the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; [163871]

(12) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the CARDS institution building projects on (i) public administration reform in Montenegro, (ii) general and health reforms in (A) Kosovo and (B) Serbia, (iii) the development of financial controls, debt management and customs systems in Croatia and (iv) the strategy and capacity building for regional development in Croatia that were financed by EU development assistance in 2002; [163917]

(13) what his Department's contribution was to the 2002 CARDS projects *(a)* for the design of a secure landfill site for hazardous waste in Albania, *(b)* on pollution abatement and control at Ballski Refinery in Albania and *(c)* on environment legislation and awareness training in Albania; and what assessment he has made of the project; [163918]

(14) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in, *(b)* the effectiveness of and *(c)* the countries benefiting from the 2002 CARDS Regional Cooperation and Integration Project on (i) regional infrastructure and (ii) democratic stabilisation; [163872]

(15) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the 2002 CARDS projects on (i) road and railway rehabilitation in Montenegro and (ii) access roads to ethnic minority enclaves in Kosovo; [163873]

(16) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the 2002 CARDS project to provide assistance to energy production transmission and distribution networks in Kosovo; [163876]

(17) what his Department's contribution to the 2002 CARDS projects for *(a)* a strategy for environmental law and *(b)* a waste management and water information system in Croatia was; and what assessment he has made of the projects. [164000]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Department is involved in projects implemented under the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) programme by contributing the UK's share of the European Commission budget allocated to CARDS and by participating in the Management Committee established to define country strategies and oversee the programme. In addition proposals for spending in Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) are approved by the Governing Board of the European Agency for Reconstruction, on which the Department is also represented. Implementation of specific projects (including procurement, which is governed by EC procurement rules) is the responsibility of the Commission.

When considering Commission funding proposals, the Department took a wide range of factors into consideration, including likely impact, cost-effectiveness and value for money. Many of the 2002 projects are in the early stages of implementation. An assessment of the projects will only be possible once they have been completed. The EC, through its results-orientated management system and strengthened evaluation systems, is best placed to carry out such an assessment.

Departmental Buildings

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* renovation and *(b)* maintenance projects on buildings (i) owned and (ii) rented by his Department were undertaken in each of the last five years; and what the associated costs were of each. [163943]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The following projects have been carried out on DFID buildings over the period in question:

1 Palace Street, London (leased):

(a) Refurbishment project over the period 2000–01 to 2001–02, total cost £27 million

(b) Maintenance and repair works to exterior of building, in accordance with requirements of lease, 2003–04, cost £1.2 million

(c) Refurbishment/replacement of lifts, 2003–04, cost £350,000.

20 Victoria Street, London (leased):

(a) Refurbishment of building over the period 2001–02, total cost £1.2 million

Abercrombie House, East Kilbride (freehold):

(a) Refurbishment project over the period 2002–03 to date (due for completion late 2004), total cost £16 million.

Departmental Officials

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which former officials of the Department have asked for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst and Young and *(d)* KPMG. [156908]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: All Civil Servants are subject to the Business Appointment Rules which set out the circumstances in which they must seek permission to accept outside appointments within two years of leaving the Service. A copy of the Rules is available in the Libraries of the House.

Information about appointments taken up by the most senior staff are published in the annual reports of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments. The next annual report will be published shortly. There have been no such requests for permission from former DFID staff to join any of the listed organisations.

EU Development Assistance

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) if he will make a statement on the commitment of EU development assistance to *(a)* the Chernobyl Shelter, *(b)* energy in Russia, *(c)* nuclear safety, *(d)* central Asia and *(e)* Azerbaijan in 2002; [163860]

(2) if he will make a statement on the EU development assistance expenditure on institution building in *(a)* Russia, *(b)* Mongolia, *(c)* Armenia and *(d)* Ukraine in 2002; [163864]

(3) what his Department's involvement was in the development assistance project in *(a)* Ukraine, *(b)* Russia and *(c)* Georgia in 2002; and what assessment he has made of each project. [163878]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: EU development assistance in these areas is provided through the Tacis programme. The Department is involved in projects implemented under Tacis contributing the UK's share of the European Commission budget allocated to Tacis and by participating in the Management Committee established to define strategy and oversee the programme. Implementation of specific projects (including procurement, which is governed by EC procurement rules) is the responsibility of the Commission.

When considering Commission funding proposals, DFID took a wide range of factors into consideration, including likely impact, cost-effectiveness and value for money. Many of the 2002 projects are in the early stages of implementation. An assessment of the projects will only be possible once they have been completed. The EC, through its results-orientated management system and strengthened evaluation systems, is best placed to carry out such an assessment.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the 2002 EU Development Assistance project entitled Support to the Regional Offices of the International Criminal Court for ex-Yugoslavia in (i) Bosnia and Herzegovina, (ii) Croatia (iii) Kosovo and (iv) Serbia; [163936]

(2) what results were achieved by the EU project for Kosovo on legal aid in civil matters in 2002; [164010]

(3) if he will make a statement on *(a)* the nature of the micro-projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina that were financed by EU Development Assistance in 2002, *(b)* the effectiveness of the projects and *(c)* his Department's involvement in the projects; [164019]

(4) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the 2002 EU development assistance projects entitled (i) Aptitude to supervise and implement the rights of children in Bosnia and Herzegovina and (ii) Stability Pact and the Roma—use your vote with wisdom, in (A) Bosnia and Herzegovina, (B) Croatia, (C) the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, (D) the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, (E) Romania and (F) Bulgaria; [164024]

(5) what the total expenditure of EU Development Assistance on the Judicial Reform project in Albania was in 2002; what his Department's involvement in the project was; and what assessment he has made of its value for money; [164001]

(6) what assessment he has made of the value for money of the EU's rehabilitation and equipping of judicial buildings project in 2002; [164011]

(7) what his Department's involvement in the EU's 2002 project to support the judiciary in Serbia was; [164012]

(8) if he will provide a breakdown by programme of the expenditure of EU Development Assistance on the Police and Organised Crime project in Albania in 2002; which of his Department's officials were involved in it; and if he will assess the results of the project; [164002]

(9) what assessment he has made of the results of the 2002 EU development assistance project towards a mutually tolerant society with all the ethnic groups in Kosovo; [164013]

(10) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the 2002 EU Development Assistance Project to prevent torture in *(a)* the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, *(b)* Serbia, *(c)* Bulgaria, *(d)* Hungary, *(e)* Poland and *(f)* Russia; [164018]

(11) what assessment he has made of the results achieved by the 2002 EU development assistance project to improve indigenous multiculturalism through education in *(a)* Croatia, *(b)* Serbia, *(c)* Bosnia and Herzegovina, *(d)* Kosovo, *(e)* Bulgaria, *(f)* Poland, *(g)* Ukraine, *(h)* Russia, *(i)* Georgia and *(j)* Armenia; [164014]

(12) if he will list the results of the EU project on the administration of justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002; and what his Department's role in achieving them was; [164005]

(13) what the stated purpose of the 2002 EU modernisation of justice project in Croatia was; what his Department's involvement in the project was; and what assessment he has made of its value for money; [164007]

(14) what assessment he has made of the 2002 EU development assistance project to improve the rights of Roma in the Western Balkans; [164015]

(15) what assessment he has made of the results achieved by the 2002 EU development assistance project to reinforce the participation of minorities in local government in Bosnia and Herzegovina; [164016]

(16) how his Department contributed in 2002 to the EU's fight against crime project in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and what assessment he has made of its value for money; [164008]

(17) how his Department contributed in 2002 to the EU's promotion of inter-ethnic relations project in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and what assessment he has made of its value for money; [164009]

(18) what assessment he has made of the results achieved by the 2002 EU Development Assistance Project to promote inter-ethnic relations in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia/Serbia; [164017]

(19) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's and *(b)* other countries' involvement in the EU Development Assistance project in 2002 on Policing in Bosnia and Herzegovina; [164004]

(20) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the EU Development Assistance projects in 2002 to rehabilitate victims of torture in (i) Kosovo, (ii) Bosnia and Herzegovina and (iii) Albania; [164030]

(21) if he will make a statement on *(a)* his Department's involvement in and *(b)* the effectiveness of the 2002 EU development assistance projects entitled (i) Support to the Electoral Observation Mission of the OSCE/ODIHR in the Western Balkans, (ii) Implementation instruments for the national strategies for Roma minorities in the Western Balkans, (iii) Support to the Accession Process in the Council of Europe and in the regional development of the democratic institutions in the Western Balkans and (iv) Respect of the Post-accession engagements in the Council of Europe and Developing and Monitoring Democratic Institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. [164025]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: For those projects implemented under the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) programme, the Department is involved through contributing the UK's share of the European Commission budget allocated to CARDS and by participating in the Management Committee established to define country strategies and oversee the programme. In addition proposals for CARDS projects in Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) are approved by the Governing Board of the European Agency for Reconstruction, on which the Department is also represented. For those projects implemented under the European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy, a similar oversight role is played by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Implementation of specific projects (including procurement, which is governed by EC procurement rules) is the responsibility of the Commission.

When considering Commission funding proposals, the Department took a wide range of factors into consideration, including likely impact, cost-effectiveness and value for money. Many of the 2002 projects are in the early stages of implementation. An assessment of the projects, and production of final spending figures, will only be possible once they have been completed. The EC, through its results-orientated management system and strengthened evaluation systems, is best placed to carry out such an assessment.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on EU development assistance to rural development in Mongolia in 2002. [164003]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: EU development assistance to Mongolia is mainly channelled through the Technical Assistance to Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) programme. Since 1994, Mongolia has been allocated EUR 50 million for various programme activities, one of which is rural development. In 2000–01 an Integrated Crop and Livestock Production project began. This project is still being implemented with a budget of EUR 2,899,520 for 2002–05.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the stated objectives of the EU project entitled Police and Organised Crime in Croatia in 2002 was; what his Department's involvement in the project was; and what assessment he has made of its value for money. [164006]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: This project is implemented under the EU Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) programme and the Department is involved through contributing the UK's share of the European Commission budget allocated to CARDS and by participating in the Management Committee established to define country strategies and oversee the programme.

In addition the project is being implemented under a Twinning arrangement, and the Home Office has successfully bid for Phase 1 of the project in 2003 under the CARDS 2002 programme and the project is due to begin this year. The general objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the Croatian Ministry of the Interior for the fight against organised crime and terrorism. The project purpose (of Phase 1, and Phase 2 under CARDS 2003) is to set up a complete Criminal Intelligence System, with all the necessary arrangements, equipment, facilities, and procedures used for the receipt, storage, interagency exchange or dissemination, and analysis of criminal intelligence information.

When considering Commission funding proposals, the Department takes a wide range of factors into consideration, including likely impact, cost-effectiveness and value for money. This particular project is still at an early stage of development and so it is not yet possible to assess its value for money. The EC, through its results-orientated management system and strengthened evaluation systems, is best placed to carry out such an assessment.

HIV/AIDS (Africa)

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* teachers, *(b)* nurses and *(c)* front-line health sector staff other than nurses that are likely to die from HIV/AIDS and related illnesses in sub-Saharan Africa in the next 10 years. [164423]

Hilary Benn: In sub-Saharan Africa HIV/AIDS is killing people in the prime of their working lives and weakening the ability of many countries to fill key public service posts needed to maintain essential service delivery. The problem is compounded by the increased demand for HIV/AIDS services (treatment, care and prevention) that must be met by a diminishing workforce.

We are, however, still at an early stage of understanding the direct extent of the impact on front-line health and education personnel as a result of death and illness from HIV/AIDS. The data available has limitations in terms of consistency and comparability.

The Department for International Development is working with development partners to assist Ministries of Education in assessing the impact of HIV/AIDS on teachers and in developing educational and management plans to mitigate those impacts. We have supported the preparation of impact assessment studies on the education systems in Botswana, Zimbabwe and Rwanda. We are working as a member of the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Education and HIV/AIDS, to train education planners on HIV/AIDS through a programme of workshops under the leadership of the World Bank. We are further supporting the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning to carry out research on the impact of HIV/AIDS on education in sub-Saharan Africa. DFID also supports the work of the United Nations Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance (CHGA), which is currently undertaking research to map the implications of capacity losses from HIV/AIDS for the maintenance of state structures and economic development in Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The research will specifically investigate the implications of HIV/AIDS on service provision in the public and private sector. It will report its findings to the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan in 2005. One study by CHGA estimates that 10–15 per cent. of health service staff in Mozambique could die from HIV/AIDS between 2002 and 2010. This would have very damaging consequences for an already extremely weak and under-staffed health system.

The UK's new strategy on HIV/AIDS is being developed in consultation with stakeholders. The strategy, which will be published in July, will emphasise the importance of assisting countries to develop both short-term "emergency" solutions to address the current shortage of health and education personnel, and to take a longer-term view of human resource planning and management in the light of the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Indoor Air Pollution

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what (1) overseas aid the Government provides for projects to eliminate or reduce indoor air pollution; [164064]

(2) if he will list the overseas aid projects supported by the Government which are aimed at eliminating or reducing indoor air pollution; [164065]

(3) what assessment he has made of the impact of indoor air pollution on health in the world's poorest countries. [164066]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development (DFID) recognises the hazards of indoor air pollution from cooking on poorly designed wood, dung and coal burning stoves—the main source of cooking and heating for half the global population. Women are disproportionately affected because the burden of cooking tends to fall on them. In addition,

high levels of indoor smoke pollution can have a particularly bad effect on the health of small children, increasing mortality from pneumonia.

DFID is working to develop a multi-sector approach to this issue, that takes account of appropriate stove technologies and the behavioural changes required to reduce women and children's exposure to indoor smoke from biomass fuels.

As part of our China programme, DFID is supporting the environmentally sustainable and efficient use of locally available sources of fuel in poor rural areas, whilst working to reduce associated health hazards and improve livelihoods, by co-financing a substantial World Bank managed project on indoor air pollution. This project addresses both technology design and product marketing, and seeks to raise awareness of the effect on health. Earlier DFID-supported research work introduced stove improvements to countries in Africa.

DFID is also supporting the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), which is a key player in this area. ITDG's November 2003 report: "Smoke: the Killer in the Kitchen", which addressed the impact of indoor air pollution on health in developing countries, was, in part, the result of DFID-funded work under the Knowledge and Research (KaR) programme. DFID also supports two other ITDG research projects:

Smoke, health and household energy; and,

Finding ways of scaling up effective and sustainable means of reducing the problem of kitchen smoke.

DFID is looking forward to signing off a Partnership Programme Agreement with ITDG in April 2004.

Further details of DFID-supported research work can be found on DFID's Energy Website, which provides information on all research and development projects in the energy sector supported by DFID's Engineering KaR programme [www.dfid-kar-energy.org.uk]. Projects R8021, R8345 and R7368 are the most relevant, but others also touch on the subject.

Mine Clearance

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development to which organisations the Government gave money for mine clearance in 2003–04; and how much was given in each case. [164325]

Hilary Benn: I attach the following table showing the actual spend by DFID for Humanitarian Mine Action in 2003–2004. These programmes cover demining programmes, contributions to the various United Nations Organisations that cover mine action and programmes covering research and the provision of knowledge.

	£
United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) core support	2,000,000
Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) core support	1,048,455
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) core support	600,000
Demining Advice BARIC Consultants (commercial company)	120,113
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) core support	500,000
Research AEA/SERCO (commercial company)	24,823
Research and Knowledge—QINETIQ 2002–2004 (commercial company)	288,392
Ottawa Sponsorship Programme (to assist participants from poorer countries attend international meetings on implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty).	16,660
Angola—Halo Trust mine clearance	117,650
Afghanistan—UNMAS demining	2,000,000
Iraq—Mines Advisory Group (MAG) demining	1,000,000
Iraq—UNMAS demining	4,000,000
N Caucasus—UNICEF mine risk education, victim support	60,000

Additionally the UK share of EC funded mine action programmes for the calendar year 2003 is estimated at approximately 8.5 Million Euros. The final figure will be available in June 2004.

Poverty (Africa)

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many *(a)* families and *(b)* children in each country in sub-Saharan Africa are living in poverty; and if he will make a statement. [164300]

Hilary Benn: Officially reported figures are unavailable for the number of families and children in sub-Saharan Africa living in poverty. The World Bank has however published figures for the number of people living below US $1 a day in Sub-Saharan Africa. They estimate that in 2000, 323 million people (adults and children) or 49 per cent. of people in sub-Saharan Africa survived on less than US $1 a day. This is an increase of 82 million on 1990 figures. The following table details figures available for poverty levels in individual countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Income Poverty and Population
$1 a day poverty line

	Percentage of population below[1]	*Year of survey*	*Number of People below (Millions)*[2]
Burundi	58.4	1998	4.1
Cameroon	33.4	1996	5.1
Cote d'Ivoire	12.3	1995	2.0
Ethiopia	81.9	1999–2000	53.9
Gambia	59.3	1998	0.8
Ghana	44.8	1999	8.8
Kenya	23.0	1997	7.1
Malawi	41.7	1997–1998	4.4
Mozambique	37.9	1996	6.8
Nigeria	70.2	1997	91.2
Senegal	26.3	1995	2.6
South Africa	<2	1995	—
Uganda	82.2	1996	18.7

[1] The percentage of population living below the commonly used international $1 a day standard, measured in 1993 international prices and adjusted for local currency using purchasing power parities.

[2] The number of people living below the $1 a day standard, measured in 1993 international prices and adjusted for local currency using purchasing power parities.

Source:

The Department for International Development's Report on Statistics for International Development 1998–99 to 2002–03.

Information on the number of children in sub-Saharan Africa living in poverty is not available from official international sources. However, a UNICEF sponsored research project produced data for children living in absolute poverty in 21 African countries. The results of the study are set out in the following table.

Absolute Poverty Among Children[3]*: country data*

	Child (< 18) population (000s) (2000)	*Percentage in absolute poverty*
Benin	3,360	74.7
Burkina Faso	6,457	84.0
Cameroon	7,453	54.3
Central African Republic	1,844	65.4
Cote d'Ivore	7,943	47.3
Ethiopia	32,456	94.0
Ghana	9,303	47.0
Guinea	4,145	71.1
Kenya	15,705	J35.8
Malawi	6,002	74.6
Mozambique	9,231	76.3
Namibia	884	69.8
Nigeria	59,108	52.6
Rwanda	3,941	86.9
Senegal	4,804	39.4
South Africa	17,589	24.3
Tanzania	18,258	78.1
Togo	2,310	61.9
Uganda	13,062	85.4
Zambia	5,571	56.8
Zimbabwe	6,645	45.3

[1] UNICEF have defined absolute poverty as: "a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only income but also access to social services".

Source:

UNICEF sponsored research paper "Child Poverty in the Developing World" by David Gordon et al, The Policy Press 2003

These figures show the unacceptable levels of poverty affecting millions of children and their families in Sub-Saharan Africa. We are committed to reducing poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and to assisting countries to make progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, including halving the proportion of people whose income is less than $1 a day by 2015. The Department for International Development's bilateral programme in sub-Saharan Africa will increase to £1 billion by 2005–2006, (up from around £650 million a year in 2002).

Secondments

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG has made to his Department since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from his Department have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [156931]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Secondments are part of the Interchange Initiative which promotes the exchange of people and good practice between the Civil Service and other organisations. The Department for International Development has not engaged in any secondment activity with PricewaterhouseCoopers, Deloitte & Touche, Ernst & Young and KPMG since 2001.

St. Helena

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of his Department's budget will be directed to St. Helena in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [163530]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID's assistance to St. Helena in the coming Financial Year, as part of a new three-year package, will be discussed with the island Government in St. Helena next month. DFID provisionally expect to disburse around £11 million in the present Financial Year, representing under 1 per cent. of total DFID expenditure. This includes funding, which we intend to maintain, in support of the island's annual recurrent budget and dedicated shipping service.

Training Courses

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what support *(a)* his Department and *(b)* UK educational institutions have given to develop courses for African educational institutions in respect of (i) teacher training courses, (ii) training of health professionals, (iii) distance learning courses and (iv) other courses; and if he will make a statement. [164422]

Hilary Benn: The existence of high quality teacher training institutions and infrastructures is central to the delivery of Education For All in Africa. Likewise, well-educated health professionals are critically important for the delivery of programmes designed to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Appropriate distance education programmes, delivered in part through the use of modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), can help to provide courses and resources to teachers and health professionals who would not otherwise have access to them.

DFID is therefore committed to providing support to African Governments and educators to help them to develop sustainable and relevant programmes that will deliver such training. We do this both through the substantial budgetary support that we provide for African Governments, and also through more focused programmes of technical assistance. The Department for International Development is committed to spending over £1 billion for education in the next three to five years, including a substantial investment in Africa. Furthermore, the £7 million Prime Minister's Imfundo initiative (www.imfundo.org) is working in eight African countries to use ICTs to deliver enhanced educational programmes in association with partners drawn from the private sector, civil society and academic institutions, and focuses particularly on teacher training. We are also working closely with

colleagues in the Department for Education and Skills, to help ensure that best UK practice in educational training can be shared with our partner governments in Africa.

Other relevant initiatives supported by DFID include £2 million support for the African Virtual University (www.avu.org) which delivers distance based university level courses across Africa, and £1 million a year funding for the Commonwealth of Learning (www.col.org), an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

The UK Higher Education Institutions are independent and autonomous bodies, and as such no central record is kept of the number and range of distance learning courses suitable for delivery in Africa, or indeed elsewhere. The Higher Education and Research Opportunities (HERO) website (www.hero.ac.uk) has details of courses available at UK Higher Education Institutions, including those delivered by distance learning. However, many UK institutions do indeed provide support for capacity building and course development in the fields of education and health. DFID has, for example, supported specific distance-learning initiatives between African and British universities in these fields through the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, and organisations such as The British Council also help to co-ordinate such collaborative activities.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Study Visas

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much money overseas students applying for a visa to study in the UK are required to show that they have available to support themselves while they are in the UK. [164155]

Mr. Mullin: There is no set amount of money that overseas students need to show that they have available in order to gain entry clearance to study in the UK. The Immigration Rules state that students must be able to show that they have sufficient funds to pay for their course and accommodate themselves without working or help from public funds. There are two exceptions to this. A student can meet some of his/her costs through earnings from employment if that employment is either at a publicly funded institution of further or higher education which is itself providing and guaranteeing the employment or a sandwich course placement which the college or university can guarantee will be available to the student.

As a rough guideline the British Council estimates student living costs (excluding fees) for 2002–03 as £768 per calendar month (£6,912 per academic year, which is a nine month period) for a course in London and £600 per calendar month (£5,400 per academic year) for a course outside London. Offer letters from educational establishments often contain an estimated cost for living expenses and the Entry Clearance Officer can also use these figures as a guide.

Aquila Al-Hashemi

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will release in part or in full the police report into the killing of Aquila Al-Hashemi. [163412]

Mr. Rammell: After the assassination of Iraqi Governing Council member Dr Aquila Al-Hashemi in September 2003, an investigation was launched by the Iraqi police with assistance from the Coalition, into her death. Once the investigation is complete it will be for the Iraqi police to decide whether the report is released in part or in full.

Asset Sales

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the *(a)* high commissions, *(b)* embassies, *(c)* buildings and *(d)* land being considered for sale. [164207]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) maintains a pro-active role in the management of its estate. Consideration of prospective sales is continual and we have no definitive list of future sales. In order to preserve the FCO's ability to obtain best value for any individual sale we cannot release general information about possible future sales in advance of individual assets being placed on the market. I am withholding this information under exemption 13 of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the *(a)* high commissions, *(b)* embassies, *(c)* buildings and *(d)* land which have been sold since 1997. [164206]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my hon. Friend to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Maples) on 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 56–58W and to the hon. Member for Ribble Valley (Mr. Evans) on 29 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1148W, which listed the sales of residential accommodation and land.

Since 1997 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has also sold the following office accommodation:

	Sold office accommodation
1998–99	British Embassy Bogota British Embassy Casablanca
1999–00	British Embassy Bonn
2000–01	British Consulate Malaga British Consulate Seville
2001–02	British High Commission Mbabane
2002–03	British Consulate Naples British Embassy Tirana
2003–04	British High Commission Capetown

BACS

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress his

Department has made to manage the changeover from the Bank Automated Clearing System to the new BACSTEL-IP system for electronic payments. [164315]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has already installed BACSTEL-IP. The system has been tested and is planned to be in use from April 2004.

BBC

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's grant was to *(a)* the BBC World Service and *(b)* BBC World Television in each of the last three years; what the turnover was of each; and what proportion of (i) programmes broadcast and (ii) the budget of each service was devoted to educational programming. [164150]

Mr. Mullin: Figures for the grant in aid paid by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the BBC World Service and for the BBC World Service's turnover in the last three financial years are:

£ million

Financial year	*Grant in aid*	*World service broadcasting turnover*
2003–04	[1]220	[3]224.2
2002–03	[2]201	205.7
2001–02	187.9	192.9

[1] Budget.
[2] Outturn.
[3] Forecast.

The proportions of BBC World Service programmes and of its budget devoted to educational programmes over the same period have been:

Percentage

Financial year	*Programmes*	*Budget*
2003–04	[1]0.7	[1]1.3
2002–03	0.7	1.4
2001–02	0.8	1.6

[1] Estimated.

In addition, the BBC World Service funds the BBC 'LearnEnglish' website, which generates traffic of over four million page impressions per month; and for the Chinese English language market it jointly runs with the British Council the 'In2English' which generates significant traffic.

BBC World Television is commercially funded by advertising and distribution revenue and is financially separate from the BBC World Service. It would not fall to me to comment on the allocation of funds within BBC World Television or on the content of its programming.

Egypt

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the *(a)* verdict and *(b)* sentence of imprisonment on three British nationals in the Egyptian State Security Court on 25 March 2004; what consular support is being provided to those concerned; and what diplomatic representations are being made in their case. [164775]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 30 March 2004]:* We will not be in a position to consider making any statement relating to the judge's decision until we have received a transcript of his summation. Our Consular officials in Cairo will continue to monitor the men's welfare and make regular consular visits. I assure the hon. Member that we will continue to do all that we properly can to assist the men and provide information and support to their relatives in the United Kingdom. We will continue to make diplomatic representations to the Egyptian Government, where appropriate, about any concerns we may have with this case, including representations about the allegations made by the men that they were tortured and mistreated in the initial days of their detention.

Eritrea

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he will make to the Government of Eritrea concerning *(a)* the arrest of nine evangelical Christians in Asmara on 17 March and the arrest of a further six evangelical Christians in Asmara on 18 March, *(b)* the arrest of 10 evangelical Christians from the Full Gospel Church in Aba Shwale district, Asmara, on 23 February and *(c)* the continuing detention of 46 evangelical Christians arrested at the Hallelujah Church in Asmara in mid-February; [164636]

(2) what representations he will make to the Government of Eritrea concerning the torture of evangelical Christians in prisons. [164637]

Mr. Mullin: We continue to be concerned about restrictions on religious freedom in Eritrea and raise the issue with the Eritrean Government regularly. I discussed my concerns with President Isaias in Asmara on 15 January. Our ambassador was able to raise the cases highlighted in the Compass Direct report with the Eritrean Government on 29 March.

EU-Africa Meeting

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which countries will participate in the EU-Africa meeting in Dublin on 1 April 2004. [164906]

Mr. Straw: Four countries will attend the EU-Africa meeting on 1 April 2004. Mozambique and South Africa will be attending for the African Union. Ireland and the Netherlands will be attending for the European Union. The AU and EU Commissions will also be represented.

India

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures have been taken since the publication of the Department's Human Rights Report 2003 to tackle discriminatory practices against the Dalit community in India. [163880]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Since the publication of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Human Rights report in September 2003 the Government have continued to raise the subject of Dalits with the Indian Government and with officials. I raised the subject of Dalits with Deputy Prime Minister Advani on my recent

visit to India (5–9 January). I met representatives of the Dalit Solidarity Network earlier this month to update myself on the situation.

The Department for International Development continues to support projects in India for the poorest groups, including Dalits.

Nepal

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by what authority a British embassy official in Nepal made a statement on 21 December 2003 that the British Government had agreed to supply two short-take-off-and-landing planes to the Royal Nepalese Army; whether the Government have agreed to give two short-take-off-and-landing aircraft to the Royal Nepalese Army; and if he will make a statement. [164909]

Mr. Straw: As part of our wider programme of support under Global Conflict Prevention funding, the Government are planning for the supply of two STOL aircraft to Nepal. The final decision will be confirmed after the departmental minute has been laid before Parliament.

In December 2003 a member of staff at the British embassy Kathmandu used previously agreed lines to respond to a press inquiry about the planned supply.

Search and Rescue

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* equipment, *(b)* personnel and *(c)* other assistance his Department provides to other countries for search and rescue operations involving UK citizens who have gone missing; and if he will make a statement. [164297]

Mr. Mullin: Foreign and Commonwealth Office Consular staff provide all the assistance they properly can to the families of missing British nationals. They help the families liaise with the local authorities and keep them up to date on developments in searches. Search and rescue operations are usually managed by the host authorities who often meet the costs. If the host authorities will not meet the costs, these would fall to the family of the missing individual or his or her insurance company.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Sri Lankan Government about the inclusion of the Sri Lankan Muslim community in peace talks. [163366]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I last had discussions about the Sri Lankan Muslim community with the Sri Lankan Minister for Constitutional Affairs Professor G. L. Peiris on 18 September 2003. Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials regularly discuss this issue in their contacts with the Sri Lankan Government and the leaders of the Muslim community.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the case of Razaz Abaker, sentenced to 100 lashes for alleged adultery in Sudan. [164029]

Mr. Mullin: Though we respect Muslims' views of Shar'ia law, we believe that the application of extreme corporal punishments is incompatible with international human rights law. In Razaz Abaker's case we are particularly concerned that there was no opportunity for appeal.

Such cases are raised on a regular basis with the Government of Sudan, both bilaterally and through the EU-Sudan dialogue.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* the United States, *(b)* Norway and *(c)* other EU countries on a peacekeeping force for Sudan. [164493]

Mr. Mullin: We are in close contact with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations about plans for a Peace Support Operation in Sudan. We have also discussed the matter with the United States, Norway and other EU member states.

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on the comments made by Mukesh Kapila, the United Nations Humanitarian Co-ordinator for Sudan on the humanitarian and human rights situation in Darfur; [164780]

(2) what assessment he has made of the implications for international peace and security of the situation in Darfur, Western Sudan. [164826]

Mr. Mullin: We are very concerned about the humanitarian and human rights situation in Darfur. We are appealing to the parties to ensure the protection of the civilian population and to allow unhindered humanitarian access to those in need.

We are also concerned about the implications of the situation in Darfur for international peace and security and are working hard to get the parties to stop fighting. The Government of Sudan and the opposition groups have now agreed to attend ceasefire talks in Chad. We hope that these talks will start shortly. This is an important first step in resolving the crisis in Darfur.

Taiwan and China

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment his Department has made of human rights in *(a)* Taiwan and *(b)* China. [164369]

Mr. Rammell: We are concerned at the use of the death penalty in Taiwan, but have no other major concerns about human rights there.

We have serious concerns about a wide range of human rights issues in mainland China including: the extensive use of the death penalty; the continuing harassment of political dissidents, religious practitioners

and adherents of the Falun Gong spiritual movement; the situation in Tibet; severe restrictions on freedoms of speech, association and religion.

We believe, however, that the best way to improve the situation "on the ground" is to engage critically with, rather than isolate, China. We do this through the bi-annual UK China Human Rights Dialogue. We raise our concerns through ministerial contacts and public statements. We also raise our concerns through EU mechanisms.

A more detailed assessment of our concerns and activities can be found in the most recent Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Annual Human Rights Report for 2003 which was presented to Parliament by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary in September last year. The report is also available on the FCO website at www.fco.gov.uk/humanrightsreport2003.

Temporary Staff

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the employment agencies which his Department has used to supply temporary staff in each financial year since 1996–97 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [163823]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office currently has an agreement with three agencies to provide us with temporary agency staff. These are:

Manpower

Hays

Select

Prior to our signing of the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Framework Agreement on the employment of Agency and Temporary Staff in July 2003, no central records were maintained. To compile such a list retrospectively would incur disproportionate costs.

Tristan da Cunha

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what role his Department played in allowing rock-hopper penguins to be removed from Tristan da Cunha for onward transport to zoos in the Far East. [148592]

Mr. Rammell: The Tristan da Cunha Island Council was responsible for the decision in May 2003 to allow 146 Rockhopper penguins to be taken from an estimated population of 50,000 birds on Nightingale Island (part of the Tristan group). The Foreign and Commonwealth Office was informed and confirmed that these birds were not subject to any international law prohibiting their collection. The capture of the birds was witnessed by the Administrator, Tristan da Cunha, to ensure that adequate standards of care and transportation were observed.

Typhoons Sale

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what role his Department is playing in the potential sale of Typhoons to Singapore. [164209]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: As is common with other important British commercial contracts, our High Commissioner and his colleagues in Singapore are actively involved in promoting the sale of Typhoon aircraft to the Singapore armed forces.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised the sale of Typhoon aircraft with Singaporean Ministers during his official trip to Singapore in January 2003.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what context Zimbabwe was raised at the recent 22 March General Affairs Council meeting; and what action was decided should be taken with regard to that country. [164954]

Mr. Straw: Zimbabwe was not on the agenda for the General Affairs Council meeting on 22 March. The previous meeting of the Council, in February, issued conclusions on Zimbabwe following the EU's decision to continue and extend its targeted measures for a further year. I welcomed the renewal of the measures and pointed out that the decision had sent a clear message that the EU wanted an end to repression and economic catastrophe in Zimbabwe and a return to democratic government and the rule of law.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Substance Abuse

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had on ensuring consistent testing and punishment for substance abuse across all sports in the UK. [164834]

Mr. Caborn: It is a matter for UK Sport, the UK's national anti-doping agency, and sport's governing bodies to carry out a robust and consistent in-and-out of competition drug testing programme.

UK Sport is currently in discussion with sport's national governing bodies and other sporting organisations to incorporate the World Anti-Doping Code into the UK's national anti-doping policy in time for this summer's Olympic Games in Athens. The code will standardise drug-testing programmes, including sanctions, across all sports.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if her Department will make greater resources available for research and development in the field of substance abuse in sport. [164835]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport funds UK Sport to act, among other things, as the UK's national anti-doping agency. It is a matter for UK Sport as the UK's national anti-doping agency to decide on the budget that is allocated from their grant in aid for research and development of drug-free sport.

In 2003–04, UK Sport's grant in aid is £23.48 million of which £2 million will be spent on drug-free sport. No monies were allocated specifically to research and development because the World Anti-Doping Agency both undertakes significant research into performance enhancing substances and methods and shares its findings with national anti-doping organisations and the sporting community. UK Sport has allocated £50,000 for research and development in 2004–05.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what educational work her Department has undertaken to inform *(a)* athletes and *(b)* the general population about the dangers of substance abuse in sport; [164836]

(2) if she will outline her Department's educational work in informing *(a)* athletes and *(b)* the general population about the dangers of performance enhancing drugs. [164838]

Mr. Caborn: The UK, through its national anti-doping agency, UK Sport, is at the forefront of delivering comprehensive and imaginative educational programmes to help athletes train and compete free from performance enhancing substances and methods.

Information is readily available to athletes and their support personnel, sport's national governing bodies, and the wider public on all aspects of the UK's dope testing programme. The education programme includes a variety of delivery methods including booklets, posters and leaflets, through to audience-specific workshops and seminars.

UK Sport offers comprehensive information via their website and e-mail service including the unparalleled Drug Information Database which helps British athletes to find out information about UK-licensed medications and substances at any time and from any place. For athletes without access to the Internet and e-mail, there is a free-phone drug information line.

During the summer, UK Sport is launching a European Commission-funded project called "Start Clean" which aims to build awareness and appreciation of the importance of drug-free sport in 13 to 17-year-olds across the UK.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will increase the resources available for educating people about substance abuse in sport. [164952]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport funds UK Sport to act, among other things, as the UK's national anti-doping agency. It is a matter for UK Sport as the UK's national anti-doping agency to decide on the budget that is allocated from their grant-in-aid to educate athletes to train and compete free from performance enhancing substances and methods.

In 2003–04, UK Sport's grant-in-aid is £23.48 million of which £2 million will be spent on drug-free sport. Of this, £53,125 will be spent specifically on education programmes for athletes and athlete support personnel. This is in addition to the World Anti-Doping Agency expenditure on education programmes to eradicate doping from sport. UK Sport will allocate around £150,000 for drug-free sport education in 2004–05.

BBC (Commercial Advertising)

Andy Burnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made as part of the Charter renewal process of the *(a)* extent, *(b)* methods and *(c)* purpose of commercial advertising by the BBC. [163959]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* Subject to one certain outcome—that it will maintain a strong BBC, independent of Government—the Charter Review will cover all aspects of the BBC's role, structure and function, including the promotion of its own products and services. We will make the conclusions—together with the evidence on which they are based—available in due course.

Community Fund

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her estimate is of the total value of funding made available to voluntary groups by the Community Fund and utilised for the employment of paid employees. [164634]

Estelle Morris: The total value of funding made available to voluntary and community organisations by the Community Fund was £2.6 billion as at 31 March 2003. It is not possible to identify the value of funding utilised for the employment of paid employees as the Community Fund does not collect this data.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what value of the Community Fund has been set aside exclusively for local groups in the Wakefield area; if she will list the total distribution from this sum to date; and if she will make a statement. [164635]

Estelle Morris: Fair share is an initiative designed by the Community Fund and the New Opportunities Fund to make Lottery funding more readily available to disadvantaged communities in 77 local areas, which so far have not received their fair share of Lottery funding. Wakefield is one of these 77 areas. The Fair Share initiative was launched in the spring of 2002 and will run until March 2005. The Fair Share target amount for Wakefield for this period is £4,765,000. To date under the Fair Share initiative £3,070,429 has been awarded to 23 projects in Wakefield, which is 64 per cent. of the total allocated amount.

Digital Television

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of households in Taunton have not converted from analogue to digital television. [164557]

Estelle Morris: At present, information on digital take-up is not available with this level of detail. However, according to Ofcom, by 31 December 2003, digital television take-up across the UK was 50.2 per cent.

We expect information on regional take-up figures of digital television to be available soon.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people over *(a)* 60, *(b)* 70 and *(c)* 80 she estimates have access to digital television; and if she will make a statement. [164764]

Estelle Morris: The information is not available. However, Growth from Knowledge (Gfk) a research company which produces research on the adoption of digital television for both this Department and the DTI estimates that at the turn of the year, 34 per cent. of over-55 households in the C2DE bracket in Great Britain had access to digital television, while 41 per cent. of households in the same age group in the ABC1 bracket had such access.

Funding (Redbridge)

Linda Perham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was allocated from the New Opportunities Fund to the *(a)* Ilford North constituency and *(b)* London borough of Redbridge in each of the last five years. [164882]

Estelle Morris: The information shown in the table is broken down by calendar year. It is derived from information supplied to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport by the New Opportunities Fund (and other Lottery Distribution bodies).

The figures are the most recent figures available.

£

	Ilford North	*Redbridge*
1999	4,000	897,644
2000	6,401	55,993
2001	45,877	1,517,962
2002	85,759	704,491
2003	206,748	865,850

Grants

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what grants were made available to *(a)* the Greater London Authority and *(b)* each London borough from her Department in each of the last four financial years. [163102]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport provides a grant of £1.9 million per year to the Greater London Authority for the promotion of London to tourists as a destination in its own right and as a gateway to the rest of the UK and for the improvement of tourism amenities and facilities.

Other grants are allocated by the Department on a national level so it is not possible to give the amount available to each London borough.

National Lottery

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much National Lottery funding has been distributed to causes in Taunton in each year since 1997. [164559]

Estelle Morris: The information shown in the table is broken down by calendar year. It is derived from information supplied to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport by the Lottery Distribution bodies.

The figures for 2004 are the most recent figures available.

Lottery funding in Taunton

	Number
1997	107,838
1998	45,954
1999	83,958
2000	108,000
2001	98,049
2002	96,096
2003	130,195
2004	8,016

Public Bodies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the *(a)* resource budget, *(b)* administration costs and *(c)* staff numbers were for 2003 of the (i) British Tourist Authority, (ii) English Tourism Council, (iii) Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, (iv) Community Fund, (v) Football Licensing Authority, (vi) Horserace Betting Levy Board,

(vii) Horserace Totalisator Board, (viii) Millennium Commission, (ix) New Opportunities Fund, (x) UK Sport, (xi) Culture North East, (xii) East Midlands Cultural Consortium, (xiii) Living East (East of England Cultural Consortium), (xiv) North West Cultural Consortium, (xv) South East Cultural Consortium, (xvi) South West Regional Cultural Consortium, (xvii) West Midlands Life Cultural Consortium, (xviii) Working Group on Human Remains, (xix) Yorkshire Cultural Consortium, (xx) Music Industry Forum and (xxi) Viewers' Panel. [164022]

Mr. Caborn: Resource budgets for 2003–04 including provision for current and capital expenditure and non-cash costs (depreciation and cost of capital charges) are shown in the following table:

Organisation	*Resource budget (£000)*	*Average staff numbers as at 31 March 2003*
British Tourist Authority (VisitBritain)	52,485	484
English Tourism Council	0	59
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment	3,846	31.7
Community Fund	0	493
Football Licensing Authority	1,128	15
Horserace Betting Levy Board	0	126
Horserace Totalisator Board	0	3,902
Millennium Commission	0	68
New Opportunities Fund	0	287
UK Sport	28,050	77

Executive Non-Departmental Public Bodies are funded by grant-in-aid and are not subject to administration costs limits. Details of their staff costs and other operating costs are published in their respective annual reports and accounts. Copies of these may be obtained from the Library of the House.

The Community Fund, the Millennium Commission and the New Opportunities Fund distribute National Lottery proceeds only, receiving no Exchequer funds, and recover their administration costs from the National Lottery Distribution Fund.

The Horserace Betting Levy Board and the Horserace Totalisator Board are funded by levies and commercial betting operations respectively.

With effect from 1 April 2003, the English Tourism Council (ETC) was merged with the British Tourist Authority (BTA) to form VisitBritain. The ETC continues as a legal entity with a new remit as the England Marketing Advisory Board (EMAB) to provide strategic guidance to VisitBritain and Ministers on the domestic marketing of England.

The Regional Cultural Consortiums are currently Advisory Non-Departmental Public Bodies. All of their costs, including administration costs are met from the Department's resource budget for 'Research and Other Surveys'. For 2003–04 the budget for Regional Cultural Consortiums is £1,600,000 (2002–03 outturn: £840,826). In 2003 they did not directly employ any staff. In 2004–05 they will become Executive NDPBs.

The Working Group on Human Remains, Music Industry Forum and the Viewers Panel have completed their work. They had no resource budget and did not employ any staff. Their administration costs were included within the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's administration costs which are published in the Resource Accounts. Copies may be obtained from the Library of the House.

Regional Assemblies

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what role regional assemblies will have in the distribution of Lottery funds. [164549]

Estelle Morris: Lottery funds are given out by Lottery distributors who operate at arms length, independently of central and local government. That same principle would apply to regional Government. However the Government proposes giving regional assemblies, where these are created, a role in the appointment of the relevant regional arts council and regional sports board, which are the regional awards committees of Arts Council England and Sport England respectively, both of which are Lottery distributors.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what grants have been made from Lottery funding to local authorities for sites of special scientific interest. [164973]

Estelle Morris: The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded 26 grants to 24 projects totalling £11,238,600 to local authorities for projects that include Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The table contains the specific local authority, the name of the actual project and the award in each case.

£

Applicant	*Project title*	*HLF award*
London boroughs of Barnet and Brent	London, Welsh Harp	420,000
London borough of Bromley	Chalking Up London's Downs	50,000
Cambridgeshire county council	Devil's Dyke Restoration Project	305,000
Staffordshire county council	Saving Cannock Chase	522,000
Carmarthenshire county council	Llyn Llech Owain Country Park	229,500
Denbighshire Countryside Service	Heather and Hillforts/Y Grug a'r Caerau—PPG	50,000
Doncaster Metropolitan borough council	Cusworth Hall and Park Restoration Project	180,500
Doncaster Metropolitan borough council	Cusworth Hall and Park Restoration Project	4,819,000
Kent county council	Brewers Wood and Randall Wood, Kent—Acquisition	91,800
SE London Green Chain Project	Heritage on Your Doorstep—Green Chain Project	47,100
Cornwall county council	Helford River—Capturing Hearts and Minds	89,700
North Cornwall district council	Atlantic Coasts and Valleys	25,700
North Somerset council	Land at Uphill	22,600
Cornwall county council	Geevor Tin Mine Heritage Centre Phase I	291,000
Borough of Poole	North Canford Heath, Whites Land—Acquisition	423,500

£

Applicant	*Project title*	*HLF award*
Brecon Beacons National Park Authority	Caeau Ty Mawr, Brecon—Acquisition	15,000
Rotherham Metropolitan borough council	Fuelling A Revolution—Canklow Wood	101,000
Sedgemoor district council	Brean Down Fort—Repairs and Stabilisation	431,400
Sefton Metropolitan borough council	Southport Pier—Restoration and Access	1,700,000
Shropshire county council	Snailbeach Leadmine Restoration Project	136,300
South Hams district council	South Devon AONB 'Changes and Challenges'	62,500
South Hams district council	South Devon AONB 'Changes and Challenges'	749,500
Southampton city council	Hawthorns Urban Wildlife Centre, Southampton—Displays	83,600
Gloucester CC Archaeology Service	Painswick Beacon Restoration Project	50,000
Surrey county council	Basingstoke Canal Woodham Backpumping Scheme	295,000
Wyre Countryside Service	Fleetwood Promenade: Coastal Interpretation and Access	46,900
		11,238,600

Sporting Opportunities (Children)

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to her answer of 8 March 2004, *Official Report,* column 1292W, (1) what assessment has been made of the activities of pupils who do not take part in, or are not offered, two hours of high quality physical education per week in Phase 1 Partnership schools; [164467]

(2) what steps have been taken to assess the two hour high quality physical education per week participation rates of young people in Phase 1 Partnership schools. [164469]

Mr. Caborn: Data collected from Phase 1 School Sport Partnership schools indicate that 61 per cent. of pupils are spending at least two hours per week on high-quality PE and sport, within and beyond the curriculum.

The results from the survey of all School Sport Partnerships will be published in April. All Partnerships will receive a report, allowing them to compare their performance with the national average and to address gaps in their provision at a local level.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the outcome was of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 22 and 23 March; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [163938]

Mr. Bradshaw: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and I represented the UK at a meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels on 22–23 March. Ministers with agriculture and fisheries responsibilities for Scotland and Northern Ireland were also present.

The Council marked with a period of silence its respect for the victims of the Madrid bombs.

The main item of business was a discussion on the Commission's proposals for a regulation to reduce the level of small cetacean bycatch. Many member states were concerned about the resource implications of the proposal, both for the fishing industry and government. In discussion we dropped our request for exemptions from mandatory use of acoustic deterrent devices ("pingers") in the 0–6 nautical mile zone and in ICES Area VIId. We argued against exemptions for under 12 metre vessels to have to use "pingers" on fishing nets and for those under 15 metres to be exempt from observer requirements. We thought only smaller vessels should be exempted but most other Member States supported the proposal. We were pleased that the Regulation offers flexibility for those member states which already have robust bycatch data to design appropriate monitoring schemes alongside provisions for mandatory monitoring schemes for those that do not. A requirement has been included in the Regulation for pilot projects to monitor the effects of "pinger" usage and to observe bycatch on under 15 metre vessels. These pilot schemes have to be designed to deliver good quality scientific data which will be used to review the Regulation after two years' experience. The Regulation also provides for the progressive phasing out of drift nets in the Baltic, which will culminate in a total ban on 1 January 2008. Taken as a whole the package is an important advance in the protection of small cetaceans.

A regulation was also adopted to protect permanently an area of cold water coral reefs off the north west of Scotland (known as the Darwin Mounds) from the impact of damaging fishing activities.

The only agriculture business was further discussion of the Commission's proposals for reform of the olive oil, cotton, tobacco and hops regimes, together with some technical amendment of existing regulations to accommodate the new Member States joining the EU in May this year. The Presidency acknowledged that several delegations were not in a position to conclude negotiations at this Council and announced an additional Council on 19–20 April in Luxembourg to deal specifically with this package. Discussion concentrated on cotton, olive oil and tobacco and largely re-confirmed existing positions. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs stressed the case for the Commission's proposal of 100 per cent. decoupling in the tobacco sector and joined those arguing for a higher level of decoupling than that proposed for cotton.

Under other business, Commissioner Byrne reported on a recent visit to the USA, Commissioner Fischler reported on progress in EU/Mercosur trade talks and Austria raised a point on harmonisation of approval procedures for pesticides.

Animal Welfare

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what procedures she uses to balance her responsibilities for protecting human health with those for protecting and promoting animal welfare. [158816]

Mr. Bradshaw: Since the Department's creation in June 2001, we have placed sustainability at the heart of our actions to protect and ensure a better quality of life for both humans and livestock. Our policies for food, health, the environment and animals can only prosper and endure if they are fully integrated so that they don't undermine each other. The elements of protecting human health and protecting and promoting animal welfare are complementary. By improving animal welfare, the risk of disease in animals, including diseases transmissible to humans, is reduced.

An outline Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain was published in July 2003. It aims to improve the health and welfare of kept animals, and protect public health from animal disease. It sets out the principles that will help inform Government decisions, which include the need to be guided by the precautionary principle.

Policy on the control of zoonoses is a collaborative process involving Defra, DoH, and, in the case of foodborne zoonoses, the FSA. Arrangements currently in place support the level of collaboration necessary to ensure the protection of human health, animal health and animal welfare.

Badgers/Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how wildlife surveyors distinguish between primary and secondary badger setts; and what effect a preponderance of unrecognised secondary setts has on the estimation of badger populations; [158374]

(2) how wildlife surveyors distinguish between primary and secondary badger setts; and what effect a preponderance of unrecognised secondary setts has on the estimation of badger populations. [158498]

Mr. Bradshaw: Ecologists have tried to classify setts according to size and function. The normal convention in ecological badger surveys is to recognise four categories of setts: main, subsidiary, annex and outlier, although there are other methods of surveying. Defra Wildlife Unit staff distinguish main setts on the basis of a number of factors including the number of holes, activity, latrine location, topography and relationship to other larger setts; secondary or 'other' setts are those not fitting the description of main setts.

Population estimates may be based on the number of main setts, with an estimated average number of badgers for a social group being applied per main sett. This approach relies upon accurate identification of main setts, and would not be affected by any other type of sett being missed; however if a main sett were misclassified e.g. as a subsidiary sett, it would affect the population estimate.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what conclusions her Department has reached on whether the proportion of diseased badgers in road traffic accidents is representative of the incidence of the disease in the badger population as a whole. [158806]

Mr. Bradshaw: The road traffic accident (RTA) survey has been designed to establish whether the incidence of bovine TB in badgers collected from road verges and other locations is representative of the prevalence of the disease in the badger population in that area. A first analysis, using the information from carcases collected so far, is expected to be completed in April.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether the proposed levy to fund compensation payments in respect of slaughtered TB reactors will be imposed on *(a)* a per head and *(b)* a per farm basis; and whether it will apply to (i) dairy producers and (ii) beef producers; [158368]

(2) whether the proposed levy to fund compensation payments in respect of slaughtered TB reactors will be imposed on a *(a)* per head and *(b)* per farm basis; and whether it will apply to (i) dairy producers and (ii) beef producers. [158571]

Mr. Bradshaw: The levy which we have in mind would be raised on a per head basis, on all the animals susceptible to any disease covered by the levy fund. Different rates of levy would be set for different categories of animals, in line with the categories which are set for the compensation regime.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what responsibility her Department has for mitigating losses incurred by farmers arising from disease reservoirs over which they have no control; [158413]

(2) whether it is her policy to compensate farmers for all losses incurred due to diseases whose main reservoir is in wildlife. [158757]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government will pay compensation to farmers and other keepers, when livestock is slaughtered for the purpose of disease control under Section 31 or Section 32 of the Animal Health Act 1981. No compensation is payable for consequential losses. Farmers, like other businesses, need to take into account any risks to their business, including the risk of disease posed by wildlife.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the predicted doubling of the incidence of TB in cattle qualifies technically for the description epidemic. [158801]

Mr. Bradshaw: Yes. The occurrence of TB is at a level in excess of what might be expected, given the previous low incidence established during the 1970s and 1980s.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether there are plans to train lay personnel to carry out live TB testing in cattle. [158803]

Mr. Bradshaw: Last year the Government consulted on a proposal to permit fully trained and competent lay personnel to carry out TB testing of cattle. We are currently considering the way forward following the analysis of the responses to the consultation.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether budget allocation has been made for the purpose of gaining public acceptance of large-scale badger culling. [158804]

Mr. Bradshaw: No.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is her objective that bovine TB should be eradicated using current control methods. [158807]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government recognise that eradication of bovine TB is unlikely to be achieved in the next 10 years using current control methods. The public consultation on a revised TB strategy for Great Britain is looking at what might be achieved in this time scale. A desirable outcome would be to achieve Officially Tuberculosis Free status, as defined in EU Directive 64/432/EEC. Our priority in the shorter term must be to prevent the spread of the disease from areas of GB where incidence is high to areas where it is low.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the clean ring strategy adopted from 1982 to 1985 led to a reduction in the incidence of TB in *(a)* badgers and *(b)* cattle; and what the incidence of bovine TB was outside the clean ring target areas during that period. [158808]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Badgers recolonising areas cleared under the clean ring strategy had similar levels of TB infection to the badgers removed; there was a reduction in the rate of cattle TB breakdowns. The Krebs Report considered this and said 'whilst removal operations may have had an effect on the prevalence of TB in badgers and on herd breakdowns, other factors may also have influenced these. In the absence of scientific controls, it is not possible to separate out the effects of badger removal from these confounding factors'.

(b) There is no known specific assessment of the incidence of bovine TB outside the clean ring target areas during the period 1982 to 1985. The table illustrates the level across Great Britain.

Incidence of tuberculosis as disclosed by tuberculin tests 1982 to 1985 in Great Britain

		Reactors slaughtered		*Herds with reactors*	
	Herds tested	*Number*	*As a percentage of cattle in herds tested*	*Number*	*As a percentage of herds tested*
1982	48,343	569	0.016	308	0.637
1983	44,830	621	0.019	322	0.718
1984	45,285	660	0.019	350	0.773
1985	43,826	699	0.021	341	0.778

Source:
Report of the Chief Veterinary Officer 1984 and 1985.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her best estimate is of the total costs of bovine TB for each of the years from 2004–05 to 2012–13, based on the assumptions used for the graph on page 23 of her consultation document, "Preparing for a new GB strategy on Bovine Tuberculosis", but in the absence of a significant wildlife reservoir. [158810]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not possible to estimate this figure. To do so would require knowledge of the quantitative contribution of wildlife to the causation of TB in cattle, a fact not currently known.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the current objective of badger TB vaccine research is to *(a)* achieve a high level of immunity in the badger population and *(b)* reduce bacterial shedding by badgers which have succumbed to the disease. [158811]

Mr. Bradshaw: A vaccine targeted at badgers would not be required to protect individual badgers against TB, but would need to reduce the transmission to cattle. Thus a vaccine that reduces the severity of the disease and/or reduces shedding of the bacteria from infected badgers by inducing protective immunity could have the desired effect. This is the current objective of badger TB vaccine research.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department will bear the market authorisation costs for a new animal TB vaccine; and whether she will be seeking a commercial partner to bring the vaccine into use. [158812]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are no plans to develop a generic animal vaccine at present. However Defra is funding research into the development of specific badger and cattle vaccines and associated diagnostic tests.

In particular, Defra is organising a workshop aimed at progressing badger vaccine development from the current research to delivery of a licensed product (BCG based vaccine) to badgers in the field. This will ensure Industry is engaged early enough for manufacturing, licensing and marketing issues to be understood and taken on board. The workshop should clarify timescales, costs and the roles for various partners, and possible models for engagement between Government, Industry and beneficiaries in the development of a badger vaccine.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 522W, on badgers, whether the gassing of badgers is deemed by her Department to be inhumane when preceded by the administration of an efficient anaesthetic gas. [158813]

Mr. Bradshaw: The gassing of badgers in their setts is not regarded as an acceptable method of killing them because of the difficulty of ensuring the correct concentration of gas throughout the sett, using the methods of delivery and gas combinations that are currently available; this applies whether the gas is intended to bring about anaesthesia or death.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the benefits of unrestricted, natural growth in the badger population. [158814]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has not made any such assessment.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1365W, on badgers, what lessons have been learned from the four badger clearance areas to which she refers. [158815]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Krebs Report considered this and said

> "a reduction in the incidence of TB in cattle in areas after badger clearances would be compelling evidence that the badgers had been responsible for TB in the cattle if alternative explanations could be eliminated".

The Government accepted the Report's recommendation that a field trial be established to investigate this issue further, and set up the Randomised Badger Culling Trial in 1998.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many applications for section 10 licences under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 permitting the killing of badgers for the express purpose of preventing serious damage to land, crops, poultry or any other form of property have been *(a)* made and *(b)* approved in respect of listed buildings or other listed sites in each year that the Act has been in force; [159116]

(2) how many applications for section 10 licences under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 permitting the killing of badgers have been *(a)* made by (i) farmers and (ii) other private landowners and *(b)* issued for the express purpose of preventing serious damage to land, crops, poultry or any other form of property in each year that the Act has been in force. [159117]

Mr. Bradshaw: When members of the public approach my Department with a badger problem, most come seeking our advice on how they can resolve their problem. Only a small number have a clear idea of what action they want to take. Because of this it is not possible to distinguish between applications on the basis of whether the applicant wanted to kill the badgers, relocate them or simply close a problem sett. Thus, we cannot provide figures for part *(a)* of these questions.

With regard to the number of licences issued to kill badgers for the purpose of preventing serious damage to land, crops, poultry or any other form of property in respect of listed buildings or other listed sites; our computerised system does not specifically record whether a building or other site is listed. Therefore we are unable to provide figures for this. We are however unaware or any such licences issued between 2001 and 2003.

The number of licences issued permitting the killing of badgers for the express purpose of preventing serious damage to land, crops, poultry or any other form of property in each year that the Act has been in force and for which there are computer records available, are as follows:

2001: 0

2002: 1

2003: 0

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which clauses of the Berne Convention relate to the mass culling of badgers for the purpose of disease control. [159127]

Mr. Bradshaw: No Article of the Bern Convention does so in such precise terms. Article 9, however, provides for 'exceptions', including for the purposes of being in the interest of public health and safety, the prevention of serious damage to livestock and research.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 6 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1109W, what the period is between the administration of each test to which badgers are subject before release; and what the statistical probability is of detecting an infected badger by the application of three tests. [159143]

Mr. Bradshaw: The minimum interval between indirect (Brock) ELISA tests should be 4 weeks.

An animal which has had three negative test results has a 2.7 per cent. risk of being infected if it comes from a population with a background prevalence of infection of 10 per cent.—We cannot be definitive when the background prevalence is subject to fluctuation.

Progress is being made in improving assays to detect antibodies against *M. bovis* infection in badgers.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answers of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 218W, and 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 482W, on bovine TB, in how many cases when traps were damaged it was judged that the traps had been recently occupied by badgers. [159145]

Mr. Bradshaw: No judgment was made or records kept as to whether traps damaged by anti-trial protesters contained trapped badgers at the time they were damaged.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answers of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 218W and 29 January, *Official Report*, column 482W, on badgers, in how many instances her

departmental officials reported the loss or damage of badger traps to the police; and what investigations were made as a result. [159155]

Mr. Bradshaw: Badger culling operations are planned in close liaison with the respective police authorities. Varying reporting arrangements for trap damage are agreed with the different police forces who investigate and record such crime according to their assessment of the local situation.

Defra does not receive information on the outcome of police investigations.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 215W, on badgers, what aspects affecting the routes of transmission of *M. bovis (a)* from cattle to cattle, and *(b)* between badgers and cattle, remain to be fully understood. [159214]

Mr. Bradshaw: In relation to cattle to cattle transmission the rate at which cattle excrete *M. bovis* varies, and the effect of age, breed, productive and health status of the animal and time since infection are not fully understood. If transmission is by the respiratory route the relative importance of proximity, ventilation and dust remains to be determined. It may be that cow to calf transmission by milk ingestion is possible: if so, how often this occurs is not known.

It has not yet been established whether cattle to badger transmission occurs and, if it does, how often in comparison with re-activation of latent infection in badger populations.

In relation to badger to cattle transmission variation in the rate at which badgers excrete *M. bovis*, and the effect of age, breed and health status of the animal and time since infection is not understood. Additionally the relative importance of contamination of pasture, feed stores and silos, feed troughs, water troughs and streams and how and why the risk is discontinuous in space and time, so that some farms can escape disease for many years while neighbours are apparently infected several times a year is yet to be established.

Defra has a number of research projects in place to investigate more fully the factors associated with *M. bovis* transmission between animals.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 215W, on badgers, whether her objective of containing the geographical spread of TB in cattle also encompassed a reduction in the incidence of TB in cattle in those geographical areas where it has already been detected. [159215]

Mr. Bradshaw: The objective of surveillance and control activity is to reduce the incidence of TB wherever it is found.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 213W, on badgers, whether the number of field officers employed are sufficient to maintain trapping frequency in proactive areas, in accordance with the protocols set out for the Krebs trials. [159216]

Mr. Bradshaw: Yes.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 16 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 821W, what assessment she has made of whether badger culling programme designs and execution need to be improved in order to reduce perturbation. [159281]

Mr. Bradshaw: The amount of perturbation is a factor of the degree of culling, and the number of badgers surviving it. The more or, conversely, the less effective a badger culling programme is, the less the perturbation effect may be. To make the sort of assessment the hon. Member suggests would require a study designed to quantify accurately the effects on the levels of perturbation that different culling programmes would have. Given the number of replicates that would be required, at varying levels of culling efficiency and badger density, this would be difficult to achieve.

Common Fisheries Policy

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment her Department has made of the obstacles to the UK *(a)* withdrawing from the Common Fisheries Policy and *(b)* creating an alternative structure for UK fisheries management; [163847]

(2) what assessment her Department has made of the legal steps that would be required for the UK to withdraw from the Common Fisheries Policy. [163848]

Mr. Bradshaw: Withdrawal from the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) would only be achievable by a complex renegotiation of European Union treaties with other member states.

The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit concludes that sustainable fisheries management is most likely to be achieved inside a reformed and regionalised CFP—and the way we carry forward their recommendations will be an integral part of the CFP reforms we agreed in December 2002.

One of these reforms was provision for the establishment of trans-national Regional Advisory Councils (RACs). These will bring together fishermen, scientists and all with an interest in the fish stocks and their exploitation to help develop ways forward to which all parties can subscribe. The industry and other organisations in the UK are at the forefront of action to establish RACs, and a Council Decision is likely to be adopted next month which will allow interested parties to take forward their proposals quickly. We believe RACs to be a groundbreaking change for the CFP—they will help develop more effective consultation and a strong regional focus.

Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cases

of computer misuse there were in her Department in 2003, broken down by category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [163253]

Alun Michael: The Department does not maintain a central list of all cases of computer misuse because these are generally handled through the line management chain or local Personnel Units.

The IT Directorate provides information in cases of suspected computer misuse. There were no cases of formal disciplinary action within the Department during 2003.

The Department seeks to ensure that all users of computer systems are fully aware of their responsibilities and legal obligations. This is done by a variety of methods such as through system training programmes, published user guides and usage policies together with general security policy guidance and advice. This material is subject to regular review and is easily accessible through the Departmental Intranet. Regular Office Notices also provide reminders of key points.

EU Sugar Regime

Claire Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the UK Government's position on reform of the EU sugar regime. [162903]

Alun Michael: The Government have already made clear that they share the European Commission's view that extension of the present regime beyond 2006 is not sustainable. We have also said that we are looking for a market based approach in line with major CAP reforms achieved in June 2003 across most other sectors.

However, sugar reform raises a complex set of issues, including implications for developing countries, and we are still considering the best way ahead, taking account of the views received in our consultation exercise which closed on 16 January and which we are still assessing.

Fallen Stock

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what provisions she has made for the disposal of fallen sheep during the current lambing season, in the absence of the Fallen Stock Subscription Scheme; [158741]

(2) what advice she gives to farmers who are banned from burying fallen stock on their land by the Animal By-Products Regulation 1774/2002/EC and who have no other means of disposal. [158746]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government are not obliged to provide a National scheme under the Animal By-Products Regulations, nor is one an essential pre-requisite to farmers being able to dispose of their livestock in a legitimate manner.

Farmers are expected to make use of existing local outlets for the disposal of fallen stock i.e. knacker yards, hunt kennels and maggot farms, use on-farm incinerators or make arrangements directly with rendering or incineration plants. However, we have asked local authorities to look sympathetically at individual cases where farmers have made every effort to comply but have faced genuine difficulties in doing so.

Farm Incomes

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects real total income from farming to return to the level of 1995; and if she will make a statement. [162876]

Alun Michael: Total income from farming in the UK is estimated to be £3.2 billion in 2003, having increased for the third year in a row. In real terms this is 28 per cent. above the 2002 level and 77 per cent. above the low point in 2000. It remains 50 per cent. below the peak in 1995.

Total income from farming in 1995 was exceptionally high due primarily to the combined effects of currency movements the UK's exit from the Exchange Rate Mechanism and favourable world commodity prices.

Government policy is to facilitate the right economic framework to enable farmers to succeed, compete successfully internationally and have a profitable future.

The Government's Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food, was published on 12 December 2002. The strategy provides a clear and strategic long-term direction towards a more sustainable future. The Government will work in partnership with industry and other stakeholders to implement the strategy, providing the leadership to allow farmers to flourish by their own efforts and to become better connected to markets and consumer requirements.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she proposes to take to maintain the growth in net farm income for *(a)* dairy, *(b)* cereals, *(c)* cattle and sheep (less favoured areas) and *(d)* cattle and sheep (lowland); and when she expects each to reach, in real terms, the levels of 1995–96. [162878]

Alun Michael: In the year ending February 2004, net farm income in England is expected to have increased on dairy farms, cereal farms and cattle and sheep farms (less favoured areas) in comparison to the previous year. Incomes on lowland cattle and sheep farms are expected to have been broadly unchanged. The increases in incomes are mainly a reflection of higher market prices and support payments in that year which, in turn, are mainly a result of market forces and movements in currency exchange rates.

The level of net farm income in 1995–6 was exceptionally high due primarily to the combined effects of currency movements following the UK's exit from the exchange rate mechanism and favourable world commodity prices.

Government policy is to facilitate the right economic framework to enable farmers to succeed, compete successfully internationally and have a profitable future.

The Government's Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food, was published on 12 December 2002. The strategy provides a clear and strategic long-term direction towards a more sustainable future. The Government will work in partnership with industry and

other stakeholders to implement the strategy, providing the leadership to allow farmers to flourish by their own efforts and to become better connected to markets and consumer requirements.

Farm Payments

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of whether a significant proportion of the single farm payment will become capitalised in agricultural land values; and if she will make a statement; [160166]

(2) what assessment she has made of the likely impact of the single farm payment on rent levels for agricultural land; and if she will make a statement. [160167]

Alun Michael: Defra will publish shortly an analysis of the economic impact on the English farming industry of the decoupling of CAP direct payment and the decision to allocate entitlement on the basis set out in my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's Statement to the House on 12 February.

Feline TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice she has issued to private veterinary surgeons on the *(a)* detection and *(b)* reporting of domestic cats infected with *M. bovis*. [159122]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no advice issued by Defra to private veterinary surgeons on the detection and reporting of domestic cats infected with *M. bovis*. TB in cats is not notifiable to the Divisional Veterinary Manager, although it is good practice to do so.

As set out in the consultation document launched by my Department last 9 February, we are proposing an amendment to the Tuberculosis (England and Wales) Order 1984, which will make the isolation of *M. bovis* notifiable in any mammal other than humans.

Horticulture

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress her Department has made in developing proposals to alter the Horticultural Development Council Order 1986 (as amended). [163634]

Alun Michael: The Horticultural Development Council has discussed the levy rate for non-agaricus mushrooms with Defra officials and this is now being considered as part of the statutory review of the Council. Any change to the levy rate will require an amendment to the Horticultural Development Council Order 1986 (as amended). As part of the review we will consider any other proposals for change to the Order including suggestions from the Council.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has had with *(a)* the Horticultural Development Council and *(b)* the Mushroom Growers Association about introducing a differential levy rate for non-agaricus (exotic) mushroom growers. [163678]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Horticultural Development Council has discussed the levy rate for exotic mushrooms with Defra officials. The possibility of a differential levy rate is being considered as part of the current statutory review of the Council and the Mushroom Growers' Association (together with other industry bodies) will be consulted on any firm proposals for change.

Milk

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effects of the code of practice between supermarkets and suppliers on the supply and sale of milk. [162654]

Alun Michael: The operation of the code has recently been reviewed by the Office of Fair Trading. Their report, publis235hed on 20 February, can be found on their website at: http://www.oft.gov.uk/News/Press+releases/2004/28-04.htm.

Rights of Way

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will extend the period of consultation on motor propelled vehicles and rights of way. [162926]

Alun Michael: No. We have allowed a period for submitting responses that is longer than the 12 weeks recommended in the Cabinet Office Code of Practice on Consultation and there has been a very healthy response.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many pieces of correspondence she received on motor propelled vehicles and rights of way when the consultation period finishes. [162927]

Alun Michael: Once I have had a proper opportunity to consider all the comments made on the proposals, I will publish a formal response to the consultation including an analysis of the numbers of responses received.

At this stage, we estimate we have approximately 13,000 formal responses, letters, emails and other written contributions.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what, and how many, representations she has received from *(a)* the Country Land and Business Association and *(b)* those declaring themselves as members of the Association about the use of modern motorised vehicles on rights of way; and if she will make a statement. [163086]

Alun Michael: Once I have had a proper opportunity to consider all the comments made on the proposals, I will publish a formal response to the consultation, which will include a comprehensive analysis of the responses to the consultation.

The Country Land and Business Association has submitted a formal response to the consultation. 3,500 postcards from members of the association, supporting the Government's proposals.

Rural Payments Agency

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many and what value of payments *(a)* have been made and *(b)* remain unpaid by the Rural Payments Agency to farmers in the North West, broken down by county. [156494]

Alun Michael: The following table shows the number and total value of claims paid to farmers in the North West broken down by county. These figures represent the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund 2003 accounting year which runs from 16 October 2002 to 15 October 2003.

The figures for the number and value of unpaid payments could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

£

County[1]	*Number of claims paid*	*Total amount*
Cheshire	2,110	16,210,308.85
Cumbria	4,852	72,822,877.45
Greater Manchester	560	4,320,959.33
Lancashire	2,639	23,156,928.16
Merseyside	188	2,762,820.68
Total	10,349	119,273,894.47

[1] The county split is in line with NUTS 2 (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) regional analysis.

Severely Disadvantaged Areas

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her assessment is of the impact on tourism in severely disadvantaged areas of the payment regime in those areas. [161538]

Alun Michael: Defra will publish shortly an analysis of the economic impact on the English farming industry of the decoupling of CAP direct payment and the decision to allocate entitlement on the basis set out in my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's Statement to the House on 12 February. We also plan to investigate changes in farmers' business practices and any associated impacts of changes on tourism.

Shellfish

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many shellfish beds have been recommended for closure since 2001, due to the monitoring of toxins in shellfish producing atypical results; and if she will make a statement. [163235]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

I am advised by the Food Standards Agency, that since April 2001, of the 395 classified shellfish beds in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, some 60 beds have, at various times, had temporary restrictions in place due to shellfish samples producing atypical positive results for diarrhetic shellfish poisoning toxins.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list local authority owned sites of special scientific interest which are in an English Nature management scheme to restore their features. [163664]

Mr. Bradshaw: English Nature has initiated proceedings on four management schemes under section 28J of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. In each case, a voluntary management agreement was reached with English Nature, before it was necessary to formally serve notice of the schemes. None of these concerned SSSI land owned or managed by local authorities.

English Nature may enter into voluntary management agreements with any owner or occupier of SSSI land. According to English Nature, management agreements have been entered into with local authorities on 204 separate SSSI units covering 4,734 hectares of SSSI land. I will write to my hon. Friend with further details.

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list sites of special scientific interest owned by local authorities which are in *(a)* favourable and *(b)* unfavourable condition; and which are improving in line with the Public Service Agreement target. [163665]

Mr. Bradshaw: The exact extent of each local authority's SSSI holding has not yet been completely defined. Overall, English Nature estimate that local authorities own or manage at least 47,000 hectares (ha) of SSSI land. Many local authorities do not have digital mapping data for their own landholdings against which English Nature can compare their comprehensive data on SSSI boundaries and condition.

Drawing on English Nature's Site Information System (ENSIS), and working with the Association of Local Government Ecologists, English Nature has identified details of 32,000 ha of SSSI land owned or managed by 256 local authorities. Of these 32,000 ha, according to the last condition assessments completed on the land, approximately 19,400 ha is in favourable condition, 6,900 ha is in recovering condition, and 5,700 ha is in unfavourable no change or declining condition. I will write to the hon. Member with further details.

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list local authorities which own land designated as sites of special scientific interest, broken down by size of holding. [163666]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer my hon. Friend to my previous answer concerning the difficulties faced by English Nature in assembling details of local authority SSSI land holdings. According to English Nature's Sites Information System (ENSIS), 256 local authorities own SSSI land. Of these, 10 local authorities own over 1,000 hectares (ha), six local authorities own over 500 ha, and 44 local authorities own over 100 ha. Details of those local authorities owning more than 1,000 ha and more than 500 ha of SSSI land are provided as follows. I will write to my hon. Friend with further details.

Hectares of SSSI land owned/managed—over 1,000 ha
Local authority name:

Barrow Borough Council
Corporation of London
Devon County Council

East Devon District Council
Exeter City Council
Maldon District Council
Metropolitan Borough of Wirral
Northumberland County Council
Staffordshire County Council
Teignbridge District Council

Hectares of SSSI land owned/managed—over 500 ha
Local authority name:

Birmingham City Council
Essex County Council
Hampshire County Council
Poole Borough Council
Surrey County Council
Waverly Borough Council

Vets

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many veterinarians the Department *(a)* employed and *(b)* had on establishment in each of the last five years for which records are available. [163529]

Mr. Bradshaw: The total number of vets the State Veterinary Service *(a)* employed and *(b)* had on establishment is shown in the table below.

		Of which:			*Of which:*	
	(a) Employed	*Fixed term appointee*	*Casual*	*(b) Had on establishment*	*Fixed term appointee*	*Casual*
1 January 1999 to 31 December 1999	12	—	—	185	—	—
1 January 2000 to 31 December 2000	13	1	1	198	1	1
1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001	22	3	1	220	4	2
1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002	60	2	33	279	5	35
1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003	22	—	11	252	—	13
1 January 2004 to 25 March 2004	14	—	12	259	—	23

Note:
The figures are given on a head count basis.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Hospital Finance

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the implications for *(a)* acute services and *(b)* care for the elderly as a result of the funding shortfall within the Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust. [164574]

Angela Smith: The Department is aware that there have been additional service pressures placed on the Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust as a result of funding issues, but at this stage the Trust expects to achieve a break-even position for 2003–04.

In recognition of the demands placed on the Trust, during 2003–04 an extra £1 million funding was made available to support Acute Services and the Elderly Programme of Care in the North Down and Ards area. Further work is also being carried out on re-balancing funding allocations, with a subsequent consultation exercise planned to take place in May 2004.

In the longer term, developments at the Ulster Hospital, including the current major re-development programme, are expected to address the equity gap. The Department continues to monitor the position and has been assured that all reasonable steps are being taken to address pressures on local community and hospital services.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he plans to take to address the funding shortfall within *(a)* the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald and *(b)* the Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust. [164575]

Angela Smith: Equity in resource allocation to localities such as that covered by the Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust is a matter for the Board concerned. In 2003–04, the Eastern Board has allocated £0.7 million specifically to address the equity issue in North Down and Ards. In addition, a further £1 million funding was made available to support Acute services and the Elderly Programme of Care. The Eastern Board will continue to address the issue of equity within its resource constraints.

On-going developments at the Ulster Hospital are expected to close the equity gap in Acute services over a number of years. In addition, a review of the formula currently used to allocate resources to HSS Boards, due for consultation in May 2004, may alter the equity position to some extent at locality level. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety will continue to work closely with the Eastern Board on this matter.

Hotels

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many hotel beds were available in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and what his estimates are for the occupation rates of hotel bedrooms in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [164067]

Mr. Pearson: The hotel figures detailed as follows are prepared by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) Quality Assurance advisory staff at the time of the statutory inspection. These figures are published monthly in the Accommodation Survey in relation to Bed Occupancy.

The total number of hotel bed spaces available in Northern Ireland is detailed as follows.

	Bed spaces per year
1999	11,163
2000	11,317
2001	11,927
2002	13,310
2003	13,247

The hotel bedroom occupancy rates in Northern Ireland for the last five years are as detailed in the following table. These figures have been taken from the NITB's Research Department's hotel occupancy report.

	Percentage occupancy rates	
	Bedrooms	Bed spaces
1999	53	34
2000	53	33
2001	53	33
2002	53	34
2003	56	37

Housing

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the time taken to release payments for discretionary grants by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Southern Division. [164610]

Mr. Spellar: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, which has an overall grants budget of £41.13 million in the 2003–04 financial year, aims to make payments within six weeks of a request for inspection provided that all the relevant invoices, guarantees and certificates have been received. In the south area 89.7 per cent. of payments are made within six weeks against a target of 90 per cent.

Manufacturing Workforce

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of the workforce in Northern Ireland was employed in manufacturing during the last five years; and what the equivalent figure was for the whole of the United Kingdom. [164057]

Mr. Pearson: Estimates of the percentage of employee jobs in Manufacturing in Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom between December 1998 and December 2003 are provided in the following table:

Percentage of employee jobs in manufacturing in Northern Ireland and the UK

Seasonally adjusted— December of each year	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom
1998	17.3	16.7
1999	16.6	15.8
2000	16.0	15.1
2001	15.0	14.3
2002	14.3	13.8
2003	13.5	13.4

Source:
Quarterly Employment Survey, DETI; Office for National Statistics.

DEFENCE

Bowman Radio System

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which private sector companies are training Army personnel to use Bowman radios; and what the value of the contract is. [162840]

Mr. Ingram: As prime contractor for the Bowman tactical communication system, General Dynamics United Kingdom Ltd. has sub-contracted the conversion training of around 75,000 personnel from all three services to Westland Helicopters Ltd. Training delivery and distributed learning is led by Westland and supported by Outstart and Vosper Thornycroft UK Ltd. Conversion training began on time in July 2003 and, to date, almost 3,500 personnel have completed their individual training.

The prime contract with General Dynamics United Kingdom Ltd. was awarded competitively. I am withholding details about the value of the contract under Exemption 13 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

Brimstone Missile

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons there was a delay in the provision of trials aircraft for the development of the Brimstone missile. [162641]

Mr. Ingram: The delay was due to a later than planned delivery of a trials aircraft from the Tornado upgrade programme.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is his intention that the Brimstone missile will supplant the use of the RBL755 cluster bomb in the anti-armour role; and if he will make a statement. [162642]

Mr. Ingram: Brimstone is an advanced air-launched anti-armour weapon designed to defeat modem and future main battle tanks and other armoured fighting vehicles by precision attack. It is intended that the Brimstone missile will replace the RBL755 in the anti-armour role.

Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many cases of computer misuse there were in his Department in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003, broken down by category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [163248]

Mr. Caplin: In 1997 and 2003, the following instances of computer misuse were recorded across the Ministry of Defence.

	1997	2003
Unauthorised access to computer material		
Incidents	2	2
Disciplined	1	1
Unauthorised access with intent to commit or facilitate commission of further offences		
Incidents	7	0
Disciplined	1	0
Unauthorised modification of computer material		
Incidents	0	0
Disciplined	0	0

It should be noted that in 1997 these incidents were not reported to a central focal point, as has since been required, and that details of disciplinary action taken are only collated once the action concerned has been completed. The above figures are the most accurate that can be made readily available under current reporting arrangements, and additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Cost Reduction Reviews

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many cost reduction reviews are under way in his Department; what the approximate cost of each of these reviews is; and how much has been spent on consultancy support to each review. [164216]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is constantly looking at ways to reduce costs and improve performance. Such work is conducted at all levels in the organisation, including as individual management activity, corporate level studies and as part of pan-Government initiatives such as Sir Peter Gershon's Efficiency Review. Where appropriate, this work draws on consultancy support. Details of the number and cost of such reviews under way at any one time are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Employment Agencies

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the employment agencies which his Department has used to supply temporary staff in each financial year since 1996–97 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [163817]

Mr. Caplin: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Equipment Programmes

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which current equipment programmes have been delayed owing to insufficient funding for them within his Department's budget. [162644]

Mr. Ingram: Many factors might cause the Ministry of Defence to make adjustments to its equipment-related spending plans, either for the current financial year or beyond.

These include the need to: reflect changes in priority between different military capabilities; ensure coherence between projects; take advantage of emerging technologies; deal with technical or commercial issues; as well as to ensure that the Department remains within its allocated resources. Changes to the timing of individual projects are very often due to a combination of these factors.

Financial Information

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will place in the Library copies of the *(a)* fixed assets registers, *(b)* balance sheets and *(c)* operating cost statements maintained by his Department's management groupings for financial years 1999–2000 to 2002–03; [164668]

(2) if he will place in the Library copies of the cash flow statements maintained by his Department's management groupings for financial years 1999–2000 to 2002–03; [164639]

(3) if he will place in the Library copies of the statements of recognised gains and losses maintained by his Department's management groupings for financial years 1999–2000 to 2002–03. [164640]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to my letters Ref: D/Min(AF)/AI 2185N/03/L) dated 21 April 2003 and D/Min(AF)/AI 4656/04/C) dated 30 March 2004, to the hon. Member for Essex North (Mr. Jenkin) for financial years 1999–2000 to 2001–02, of which copies have been placed in the Library of the House. I will write to the hon. Member to provide the corresponding information for financial year 2002–03 and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Interpreters

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's policy is regarding the use of non-military interpreters; what training is provided for non-military interpreters before deployment; and if he will make a statement. [161282]

Mr. Ingram: Both civilian and military interpreters are employed on operations as requirements demand. Civilian interpreters include Ministry of Defence personnel and nationals from the region. Those taken on locally generally assist with low-level communication with the local population.

MOD civilians employed on operations are trained in essential skills appropriate to the theatre in which they are deployed and the role that they are to perform. Typical training includes first aid, environmental health, and operational, chemical and biological, cultural, and mine awareness. Like their military colleagues, they also receive pre-deployment medical and dental examinations and, where necessary, vaccinations against diseases.

Iraq

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 25 February 2004, reference 153466, what surveys of public perceptions of the Ministry of Defence, the armed forces and their equipment have taken place since the start of military action in Iraq; what the *(a)* title and *(b)* nature of these surveys were; what the findings of each survey were; where these findings have been published; and if he will make a statement. [158270]

Mr. Caplin: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers have been *(a)* killed in Iraq, *(b)* injured seriously enough to warrant a return from Iraq and *(c)* injured but stayed in Iraq to continue service, broken down by soldiers based in (i) Wales, (ii) England, (iii) Scotland and (iv) Northern Ireland. [158891]

Mr. Ingram: As at 25 March, 58 United Kingdom military personnel had been killed while deployed on Operation TELIC in Iraq. We record centrally only those casualties that have been medically evacuated to the United Kingdom. As at 25 March the total was 2,381. Casualties' countries of origin are not recorded centrally and the information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether Ministry of Defence civilian staff have been used in the reconstruction of Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [158892]

Mr. Ingram: As at 21 March 2004, 67 Ministry of Defence civilians were deployed in Iraq supporting the reconstruction of the country in a number of roles including policy advice, interpreting, contracting and administrative support.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which Welsh regiments have served in Iraq since the beginning of hostilities; which regiments are presently in Iraq; and what amount of leave was given to each regiment during their tour of duty abroad. [158893]

Mr. Ingram: The Queens Dragoon Guards served in Iraq from March to June 2003. Personnel were entitled to two weeks leave at the end of their tour of duty in accordance with post operational tour leave guidelines issued at the time.

The 1st Battalion Royal Regiment of Wales was deployed to Iraq in December 2003 and on current planning is due to serve until June 2004. Personnel will generally be entitled to 14 days leave during their tour of duty, and four weeks post-operational tour leave on return to the United Kingdom. This is in accordance with the operational welfare package policy for service in an operational area.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many individuals are being held by UK forces in Iraq; and what the average length of detention is. [148577]

Mr. Ingram: Article 78 of the IV Geneva Convention (1949) allows the United Kingdom as the Occupying Power to intern people where it considers it necessary for imperative reasons of security. Internees will continue to be held until such time as they are no longer considered a threat to Coalition Forces.

As at 24 March 2004, the UK held 81 internees in Iraq. Of those currently held, the average length of internment is around four and a half months.

Lost Armaments

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what steps will be taken to find the missiles lost in the Bristol Channel in 2001; [161878]

(2) what help is being given to QinetiQ to help find the missile lost in the Bristol Channel; [161877]

(3) how many armaments were lost in the Bristol Channel and the Severn estuary in the last five years; [161876]

(4) what the total number of *(a)* man hours and *(b)* resources were spent on looking for the missile lost in the Bristol Channel in the last five years; [161875]

(5) what the role of the range at Weston-super-Mare will be following the loss of missiles from it in 2003. [161873]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has no record of missiles being lost in the Bristol Channel or Severn Estuary in either 2001 or 2003. We are aware of only one incident of armaments being lost in the Bristol Channel or Severn estuary in the last five years. In March 2002, a pallet of munitions was lost at the St. Thomas' Head range near Weston-super-Mare, which is operated by QinetiQ. The pallet is presumed to have been swept away by very strong spring tides. The pallet contained eight anti tank bar mines (with the fuses removed) and 20 warheads which had been removed from Swingfire missiles.

Extensive searches have been undertaken by the Avon and Somerset Constabulary, HM Coastguard, the Royal Air Force, the Royal Navy Southern Diving Group (SDG) and QinetiQ. The pallet has not, however, been located.

The SDG conducted two searches of the range area, consuming around 160 man-hours in March 2002 and about 220 man-hours in October 2002. QinetiQ carried out searches on foot and by boat and helicopter, expending a total of more than 110 man-hours. The RAF consumed a total of 15 man-hours on the task, including transit to and from the search area. The MOD does not have details of the resources consumed by either the Avon and Somerset Constabulary or HM Coastguard.

Use of the St. Thomas' Head range continues to be covered by the Long Term Partnering Agreement that has been negotiated with QinetiQ for the delivery of a long term test and evaluation capability to the MOD.

Military Gifts

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the decision-making process is for granting military gifts under the global conflict prevention fund. [164908]

Mr. Ingram: The gifting of military equipment is permissible under the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) where it is considered essential to the success of an agreed strategy and endorsed by Pool officials on the relevant strategy Steering Team or Ministers. Gifts over £100,000 require a Departmental Minute to be laid before both Houses, under the normal 14 working days rule, before a final decision is taken. An export licence, or export licence waiver, is sought as appropriate. Potentially lethal military equipment (such as weapons and ammunition) can only be gifted through the GCPP with the approval of Ministers.

Mines

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether a decision has been made on the disposal of *(a)* Mk 7 and *(b)* L3A1 anti-vehicle mines. [163207]

Mr. Ingram: The total stock of Mk 7 and L3A1 anti-vehicle mines was earmarked for disposal on 10 January 2003. These mines are being disposed of through a contract with QinetiQ. There are still stocks awaiting physical disposal.

MOD Properties

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many residential properties owned by his Department are currently empty in the Greater Portsmouth area. [164623]

Mr. Caplin: In the Greater Portsmouth area nearly all the family housing used by the Ministry of Defence is owned by Annington Homes. Some 389 quarters are currently empty and within this figure 46 are in the course of disposal, 57 await modernisation, some 131 are held for future unit deployments and 94 are pre-allocated for Service families. The remainder are available to let.

NAAFI Shops

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the price of goods available to British forces in NAAFI shops overseas, with particular reference to Iraq, compared with NAAFI shops in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [164179]

Mr. Ingram: NAAFI pricing policy is routinely reviewed by the Ministry of Defence in the forum of the NAAFI Council, which is the body that provides strategic direction to NAAFI under the chairmanship of the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff, Personnel.

NAAFI prices in Iraq are set at a level that, depending on the products involved, match either local competition (e.g. in the stores serving American and Dutch troops), prices charged by NAAFI in Germany, (which are in the main substantially cheaper than in the United Kingdom), or at the same prices as in Spar shops in the UK.

Personnel Outflow

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people have left *(a)* the Highlanders, *(b)* the Black Watch, *(c)* the Royal Scots, *(d)* the Royal Highland Fusiliers, *(e)* the King's Own Scottish Borderers, *(f)* the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, *(g)* the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, *(h)* Scots Guards and (i) F Company Scots Guards in each of the last five years owing to exit codes (i) 9.398, (ii) 9.403, (iii) 9.404, (iv) 9.405, (v) 9.411, (vi) 9.413, (vii) 9.414 and (viii) PVR. [164717]

Mr. Ingram: It will take some time to collate data about the outflow of personnel under the Queen's Regulations listed for all the requested Regiments. I will therefore write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Postal Services

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his policy towards postal services for forces on operations overseas. [164197]

Mr. Ingram: Postal services for HM Forces on overseas operations form part of the overall Operational Welfare Package (OWP). The postal element of this consists of free Forces Air Letters ("Blueys") and their electronic equivalent, the "e-Bluey", and airmail letters and packets up to 2kg at a subsidised rate equivalent to UK inland first class postage. When operational circumstances permit, a surface parcel service is also made available at a subsidised rate.

In addition to these comprehensive arrangements, an exceptional extension to the service for Iraq only was provided from 17 April 2003 to enable families of deployed personnel to post airmail letters and packets up to 2kg free of charge. The free packet service was introduced in recognition of the particularly austere conditions faced by personnel in Iraq and of the fact that parts of the OWP were not available to them. Since the entire OWP will be available from April, I advised the House in my Written Statement of 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 69–70WS, that this temporary free postal service would be discontinued with effect from 8 April 2004, to bring provisions in Iraq into line with those for other operational theatres.

RAF Strike Command

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will assess the advantages of moving RAF Strike Command from High Wycombe to Gloucestershire; and if he will make a statement. [164304]

Mr. Ingram: The study into the possible collocation of the RAF Headquarters is still at an early stage. The study team will consider the relative merits of all the options and will report their findings in due course.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the cost savings of moving RAF Strike Command from High Wycombe to Gloucestershire; and if he will make a statement. [164305]

Mr. Ingram: The study into the possible collocation of the RAF Headquarters is still at an early stage, therefore no estimate of potential cost savings has yet been made for any of the options under consideration.

Sanctuary Magazine

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the target audience is of Sanctuary magazine; and what its circulation is. [163545]

Mr. Caplin: Sanctuary Magazine exists to communicate and promote the Ministry of Defence's conservation policy, with the target audience being MOD staff who need to be aware of the broad conservation agenda (including MOD Conservation Groups); external bodies with a need to know about MOD's conservation efforts; and targeted to members of the general public who may wish to be made aware of our conservation challenges and the work MOD does to address them.

25,000 copies of the 2003 edition of Sanctuary were printed. 50 per cent. were distributed internally within MOD and 50 per cent. were distributed to a range of external stakeholders (including members of both Houses) and members of the general public.

Search and Rescue Radar Equipment

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many aircraft available to his Department are fitted with synthetic aperture radar equipment for use in search and rescue operations, broken down by type; and if he will make a statement. [164296]

Mr. Ingram: None. Synthetic aperture radar will be fitted to the Nimrod MRA4,18 of which are currently due to enter service in 2009. This capability is, however, unlikely to be used in search and rescue operations, as MOD platforms engaged in such operations are already equipped with other, more appropriate, technologies.

Site Decontamination/Stores Write-offs

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department has spent in each year since 1997 on *(a)* site decontamination and *(b)* stores write-offs. [164218]

Mr. Caplin: It will take some time to collate this information. I will therefore write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Staff Relocation Costs

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent in each year since 1997 on re-location of Ministry of Defence staff. [164219]

Mr. Caplin: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Swan Hunter

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will bring forward the building of *(a)* the Joint Casualty Treatment Ship and *(b)* the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability project to fill the workload gap at Swan Hunter Wallsend. [156559]

Mr. Ingram: The Joint Casualty Treatment Ship project is currently in its Assessment phase and the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability project is in its Concept phase. A range of options for meeting these two requirements is still therefore under consideration. As part of that work, in line with Defence Industrial Policy, the Department considers a wide range of issues including loading in the UK's shipyards. On current plans, it is not, however, expected that any build contracts for these projects will be placed before the middle of the second half of this decade.

Unmarried Partners

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether unmarried partners are eligible for Defence Housing Executive married quarters if they are in a recognised relationship; and if he will make a statement. [163627]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 30 March 2004]:* The Tri-Service Accommodation Regulations govern the allocation of married quarters to serving personnel. They do not allow cohabitation with a partner who is not a legal spouse.

However, this policy is currently under review and when a conclusion is reached the House will be advised.

Works Projects

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the radiological decontamination works at Aldershot, pursuant to project 5067. [163969]

Mr. Caplin: Work was undertaken between October 2001 and March 2002 to remove radiological contamination from the former Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers' site in Aldershot following a Land Quality assessment and surveys undertaken by Defence Evaluation and Research Agency Radiological Protection Services. The work was limited to the removal of detectable radium above the regulatory limit.

When contamination was first identified, the local authority, local inhabitants and the media were made aware of the project, and they were kept informed of progress. The site was also fenced and warning signs erected. Tenders were only invited from contractors with an established reputation in radiological decontamination and the work followed current best practice including on the minimisation of waste transferred to licensed landfill sites and to British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., Drigg. I can confirm that the project was completed on 8 March 2002.

CABINET OFFICE

Office of the e-Envoy

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what total expenditure has been on the Office of the e-Envoy in *(a)* the last 12 months and *(b)* since it was established. [160023]

Mr. Alexander: The total expenditure for the Office of the e-Envoy over the last 12 months to the end of February 2004 was £17.2 million.

The costs for each financial year are detailed in the table:

	Costs (£000)
2000–01	15,003
2001–02	20,716
2002–03	15,649

Note:
Figures for the financial year 2003–04 are not yet available

The Office of the e-Envoy was established in September 1999. Expenditure was posted to the same user analysis codes as CITU (Cabinet-Office IT Unit) and therefore cannot be separately identified until April 2000.

Regulatory Impact Unit

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the total expenditure *(a)* in the past 12 months and *(b)* since its inception was on the Regulatory Impact Unit; and if he will make a statement. [160037]

Mr. Alexander: The total expenditure for the Regulatory Impact Unit over the last 12 months to the end of February 2004 was £3.1 million.

The costs for each financial year are detailed as follows:

	Costs (£000)
1997–98	1,598
1998–99	1,811
1999–2000	1,973
2000–01	2,324
2001–02	2,502
2002–03	2,981

Note:
Figures for Financial year 2003–04 are not yet available.

Strategy Unit

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what the total expenditure of the Strategy Unit was *(a)* in the past 12 months and *(b)* since it was established; [160027]

(2) what the expenditure has been on each review that has been conducted by the Strategy Unit since its inception; and if he will make a statement. [160030]

Mr. Alexander: The total expenditure for the Strategy Unit over the 12 months to the end of February 2004 was £5.0 million.

The costs for each financial year are detailed as follows:

June 2002 to March 2003: £6,126k

Figures for financial year 2003–04 are not yet available.

It is not possible to disaggregate the figures by individual review.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many projects undertaken by the Strategy Unit since its creation have impacted directly on the South West; and what assessment he has made of their effect on that region. [164564]

Mr. Alexander: The Strategy Unit carries out a range of functions:

long-term strategic reviews of major areas of policy;

studies of cross-cutting policy issues;

work with departments to promote strategic thinking and improve policy-making across Whitehall; and

work to improve the quality and standards of Government social research.

A full list of SU projects is available on its website: www.strategy.gov.uk

No assessment of the regional impact of the unit's work has been carried out.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Parliamentary Estate

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission what *(a)* renovation and *(b)* maintenance projects on the parliamentary estate were undertaken in each of the last five years; and what the associated costs were of each. [163952]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: It is not possible to make a useful distinction between renovation and maintenance, as many projects contain elements of both, and some involve new works as well. The projects undertaken on the Parliamentary Estate in each of the last five years are listed as follows:

1999–2000

rationalisation of water services;

repairs to river wall: Speaker's Steps;

New Palace Yard perimeter wall restoration;

lift machinery renewal;

electrical equipment renewal;

overhaul Central Lobby chandelier;

oil painting conservation;

asbestos removal from plant rooms;

stone cleaning—Picture Corridor South;

restoration of grained ceilings;

restoration of Committee Room 10 and installation of air conditioning;

Smoking Room conservation

2000–01

Crypt Chapel ceiling conservation;

repairs to river wall;

Royal Court stone restoration;

stone cleaning—Picture Corridor North;

various roof repairs;

asbestos removal from plant rooms;

oils, prints, watercolours and statues conservation;

rationalisation of water services;

various roof repairs;

lift machinery renewal;

stone cleaning—Picture Corridor East;

underground car park: escalator machinery renewal;

restoration of Committee Rooms 4, 5 and 6 and installation of air conditioning;

Old Palace Yard restoration Phase I;

restoration of Committee Rooms 1, 2 and 3 and installation of air conditioning;

major refurbishment of Norman Shaw South building;

St. Stephen's Tower: refurbishment of offices;

Commons Court: refurbishment of offices;

Old Palace Yard restoration Phase II.

2002–03

various roof repairs;

stone restoration: Commons Court and Commons Inner Court;

lift machinery renewal;

pinnacle repairs: Palace of Westminster;

Palace boiler and chiller plant modernisation;

Palace basement plant room modernisation and asbestos removal;

restoration of Speaker's Green;

restoration of Committee Rooms 7, 8 and 9 and installation of air conditioning;

Old Palace Yard restoration Phase III;

major refurbishment of Norman Shaw South building;

Plaid Cymru and SNP offices: modernisation.

2003–04

Palace boiler and chiller plant modernisation;

roof and gutters repair: Westminster Hall;

various roof repairs: Palace of Westminster;

stone restoration: Commons Court and Commons Inner Courts;

modernisation of basement plant rooms and asbestos removal;

encaustic tile restoration: St. Stephens Hall;

bronze window repairs;

restoration of Committee Rooms 15 and 16 and installation of air conditioning;

restoration of Speaker's Green.

The costs of individual projects are difficult to assign annually, as many extend over several financial years. Over the last five years, the average annual cost, in cash terms, to the House of Commons of new works, renovation and maintenance on the Parliamentary Estate, excluding Portcullis House, has been approximately £23 million.

PRIME MINISTER

Correspondence

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister when he expects to reply to the letter of 20 March from Radomir Putnikovic, Vice-president of the Serb National Unity Congress, on Kosovo. [164937]

The Prime Minister: I have asked my hon. Friend the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. MacShane) to reply on my behalf.

British Prisoners (Egypt)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister if he will meet the families of Ian Nisbet, Reza Pankhurst and Maajid Nawaz, along with their hon. Members, following the verdict on 25 March. [164841]

The Prime Minister: I have asked my noble and right hon. Friend the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean) to meet with the families and their hon. Members on my behalf.

Tibet

Kate Hoey: To ask the Prime Minister what his diary commitments are for the dates when the Dalai Lama will be visiting the UK. [165237]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to my answer to the hon. Member for Lewes (Mr. Baker) on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1375W.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Council Tax (Pensioners)

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the cost will be in each of the next five years of providing the £100 payment announced in the Budget Statement to pensioners aged 70 years and over to assist with council tax; and what the cost would be in each of those years if the payment were to be made to all those aged 65 years and over; [164229]

(2) if he will make a statement on *(a)* how and *(b)* when the £100 payment announced in the Budget Statement to pensioners to assist with council tax will be made. [164230]

Malcolm Wicks: We are looking at the most cost-effective and efficient way to deliver payments.

It is intended that a single one-off payment is made in 2004–05. However, the costs of providing a £100 payment to all households containing a person aged 70 or over and to all households containing a person aged 65 or over in each of the next five years are shown in the table.

£ million

	Household aged 70 +	*Household aged 65 +*
2004–05	430	660
2005–06	430	640
2006–07	430	630
2007–08	440	620
2008–09	460	620

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest £10 million and are given in 2004–05 prices.
2. Figures for 65+ households include the cost of 70+ households.
3. Figures exclude cases in residential care or nursing homes.
4. It is assumed that the £100 is not increased in line with prices.

Source:
Estimate based on DWP administrative data and 2002 based population forecasts from the government actuary's department.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the number of pensioners in Scotland who will receive the £100 payment to help with council tax bills, broken down by *(a)* parliamentary constituency and *(b)* local authority area. [164471]

Malcolm Wicks: The latest available data showing households in Scotland with at least one occupant aged 70 or over broken down by *(a)* parliamentary constituency and *(b)* local authority area are in the tables. We expect the 2004–05 figures to be similar.

Households in Scotland with at least one occupant aged 70 or over by parliamentary constituency

Parliamentary constituency	*Number of households*
Aberdeen Central	5,320
Aberdeen North	4,995
Aberdeen South	6,665
Airdrie and Shotts	5,380
Angus	6,850
Argyll and Bute	5,715
Ayr	7,430
Banff and Buchan	6,055
Caithness Sunderland and Easter Ross	4,605

Households in Scotland with at least one occupant aged 70 or over by parliamentary constituency

Parliamentary constituency	*Number of households*
Carrick Cumnock and Doon Valley	7,360
Central Fife	5,990
Clydebank and Milngavie	6,165
Clydesdale	6,515
Coatbridge and Chryston	5,025
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	3,790
Cunninghame North	6,505
Cunninghame South	4,590
Dumbarton	5,295
Dumfries	7,585
Dundee East	6,195
Dundee West	5,810
Dunfermline East	5,705
Dunfermline West	5,095
East Kilbride	6,605
East Lothian	6,850
Eastwood	6,995
Edinburgh Central	4,510
Edinburgh East and Musselburgh	6,500
Edinburgh North and Leigh	4,370
Edinburgh Pentlands	5,715
Edinburgh South	5,645
Edinburgh West	7,285
Falkirk East	5,915
Falkirk West	5,715
Galloway and Upper Nithsdale	7,015
Glasgow Anniesland	5,380
Glasgow Baillieston	3,915
Glasgow Cathcart	3,715
Glasgow Govan	2,665
Glasgow Kelvin	2,690
Glasgow Maryhill	3,190
Glasgow Pollok	4,750
Glasgow Rutherglen	4,905
Glasgow Shettleston	2,935
Glasgow Springburn	3,760
Gordon	5,785
Greenock and Inverclyde	4,395
Hamilton North and Bellshill	4,920
Hamilton South	4,240
Inverness East Nairn and Lochaber	7,195
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	6,635
Kirkcaldy	6,345
Linlithgow	5,025
Livingston	4,205
Midlothian	5,075
Moray	6,690
Motherwell and Wishaw	6,105
North East Fife	7,075
North Tayside	7,860
Ochil	5,635
Orkney and Shetland	3,205
Paisley North	4,355
Paisley South	5,180
Perth	7,255
Ross Skye and Inverness West	5,960
Roxburgh and Berwickshire	5,615
Stirling	5,730
Strathkelvin and Bearsden	6,465
Tweeddale Ettrick and Lauderdale	5,710
West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine	5,530
West Renfrewshire	4,345
Western Isles	2,605
Scotland	394,820

Notes:
1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Any residence found to have four or more occupants is not included in these figures as it is assumed to be Residential Care Nursing Home.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, WFP data Winter 2002–03 100 per cent. sample.

Households in Scotland with at least one occupant aged 70 or over by local authority

Local authority	*Number of households*
Aberdeenshire	16,650
Angus	10,065
Argyll and Bute	7,635
City of Aberdeen	16,980
City of Dundee	12,015
City of Edinburgh	32,540
City of Glasgow	33,515
Clackmannanshire	3,790
Dumfries and Galloway	14,600
East Ayrshire	10,105
East Dumbartonshire	8,815
East Lothian	8,340
East Renfrewshire	6,995
Falkirk	11,630
Fife	30,215
Highland	17,760
Inverclyde	5,900
Midlothian	6,205
Moray	7,415
North Ayrshire	11,090
North Lanarkshire	23,295
Orkney Islands	1,705
Perthshire and Kinross	12,660
Renfrewshire	12,375
Scottish Borders	10,195
Shetland Isles	1,500
South Ayrshire	11,320
South Lanarkshire	23,405
Stirling	6,810
West Dumbartonshire	7,460
West Lothian	9,225
Western Isles	2,605
Scotland	394,820

Source:
IAD Information Centre, WFP data Winter 2002–2003 100 per cent. sample.

Civil Service Jobs

Mr. Prosser: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which posts will be lost in his Department under the Chancellor of the Exchequer's plan to reduce numbers of civil servants; and what assessment he has made of proposals to cut 30,000 jobs. [163177]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 25 March 2004]:* The Department has been developing plans for a reduction of up to 18,000 posts since 2002. This is now part of a four-year plan to reduce the number of posts by 30,000. This will reflect the new business model being rolled-out in Jobcentre Plus including more front-line staff conducting work-focused interviews; a Pension Transformation Programme and reductions in staffing in the Pension Service; the introduction of Child Support reform; and savings in "back office" functions in HR, finance and IT support.

The detail of how reductions will be allocated and profiled between businesses and corporate services will be developed in the normal way through our business planning processes and in discussion with the trade unions. We will provide further detail after the Spending Review settlement.

National Insurance Fund

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make it his policy to use the surplus in the National Insurance Fund to increase state pensions. [164117]

Malcolm Wicks: We are committed to ensuring that the basic state pension remains the foundation for income in retirement, paid for from the National Insurance Fund with a guarantee to increase it by at least 2.5 per cent. a year. We will continue to manage the fund prudently to achieve that objective.

National Minimum Wage

Peter Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* families and *(b)* children in (i) the UK and (ii) the Wrekin he estimates have been lifted out of poverty by the minimum wage. [164053]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available.

The national minimum wage, together with tax credits, has helped to make work pay, with guaranteed minimum incomes for those in employment. From October 2004, when the minimum wage increases to £4.85 per hour, a single earner couple with one child, working full time (35 hours per week) on a minimum wage will have an income of £252 per week.

Pension Credit

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in the Government Office for the South West Region were eligible for Pension Credit on the latest date for which figures are available; how many eligible pensioners in Taunton were claiming Pension Credit on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many pensioners in Taunton were claiming the minimum income guarantee prior to the introduction of Pension Credit. [164661]

Malcolm Wicks: We estimate that there are approximately 300,000 pensioner households in the South West Government Office Region likely to be eligible for Pension Credit, equivalent to approximately 350,000 individuals. As at 29 February there were 3,870 households in the Taunton constituency, comprising approximately 4,615 individuals, receiving Pension Credit. As at 3 October 2003 there were 2,840 households in Taunton, comprising approximately 3,275 individuals, receiving the Minimum Income Guarantee.

Notes:

1. Estimates of numbers eligible are rounded to the nearest 50,000.
2. Numbers of recipients have been rounded to the nearest five.
3. Numbers of recipients of pension credit exclude small numbers of clerical cases.

Pensions

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if the Government will make it their policy to restore parity between the state pension available to British citizens resident overseas and that available to UK residents. [164592]

Malcolm Wicks: The UK state pension is payable in all countries abroad to those who are entitled to it. It is uprated in the normal way for UK pensioners living overseas where there is a legal requirement or a reciprocal social security agreement to do so.

The Government are focusing their resources on helping poorer pensioners in the UK and has no plans to unfreeze UK state pensions paid overseas.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how the additional payment of £100 for those over 70 announced in the Budget will be paid to pensioners in Northern Ireland. [164388]

Malcolm Wicks: We anticipate that payments will be made in the same way for people in Northern Ireland as for the rest of the United Kingdom. We are looking at the most cost-effective and efficient way to deliver payments.

Redundancies/Redeployment

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many *(a)* redundancies and *(b)* redeployments he plans to make in (i) his Department, (ii) Jobcentre Plus, (iii) the Child Support Agency, (iv) the Pension Service, (v) the Disability and Carers Service, (vi) the DWP Corporate Centre and (vii) the Appeals Service in each of the next four years; how many will be front-line staff; and if he will make a statement; [163294]

(2) what estimate has been made of the savings which are likely to be made through the redundancy programme in his Department in each of the next four years; and if he will make a statement; [163297]

(3) to what areas of his Department he plans to redeploy staff in the next four years; how many of these will be front-line positions; and if he will make a statement. [163298]

Maria Eagle: The Department has been developing plans for a reduction of up to 18,000 posts since 2002. This is now part of a four-year plan to reduce the number of posts by 30,000. This will reflect the new business model being rolled-out in Jobcentre Plus including more front-line staff conducting work-focused interviews; a Pension Transformation Programme and reductions in staffing in The Pension Service; the introduction of Child Support reform; and savings in "back office" functions in HR, finance and IT support.

The detail of how reductions will be allocated and profiled between businesses and corporate services will be developed in the normal way through our business planning processes and in discussion with the trade unions. We will provide further detail after the Spending Review settlement.

Sure Start Maternity Grant

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many mothers in Stroud have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* obtained the Sure Start maternity grant. [164166]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the format requested; the available information is in the table.

Sure Start Maternity Grants for Gloucestershire Social Fund District/Jobcentre Plus District

	Applications	*Awards*
2000–01	1,449	1,146
2001–02	1,723	1,335
2002–03	2,150	1,696
2003–04 (to February)	2,089	1,599

Notes:
1. Data is not available by parliamentary constituency. Stroud parliamentary constituency is part of Gloucestershire Jobcentre Plus District, which was previously Gloucestershire Social Fund District.
2. Sure Start Maternity Grants were introduced on 27 March 2000. The very small numbers of cases for 1999–2000 have been excluded for data protection reasons.
3. Data for 2003–04 is for April 2003 to February 2004 only.
4. Data is given for all applications and awards, irrespective of whether the application was made by the mother or her partner.

Source:
DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System.

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Sure Start Maternity Grants were awarded in north Tyneside in each of the last seven years. [164374]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the format requested; the available information is in the table.

Sure Start Maternity Grants awards for the area covered by Newcastle and North Tyneside Jobcentre Plus District and Northumberland Jobcentre Plus District

	Awards
2000–01	2,842
2001–02	3,096
2002–03	3,626
2003–04 (to February)	3,139

Notes:
1. Data are not available by local authority. North Tyneside local authority is part of Newcastle and North Tyneside Jobcentre Plus District, which was formed in January 2003 when Wallsend and North Shield sites were transferred from Northumbria Social Fund District to Newcastle Social Fund District. The remainder of Northumbria became Northumberland Jobcentre Plus District. Prior to the boundary change, North Tyneside was partly in Newcastle Social Fund District and partly in Northumbria Social Fund District. For comparison purposes, data are given for the area covered by the Newcastle and North Tyneside Jobcentre Plus District and the Northumberland Jobcentre Plus District.
2. Data for 2003–04 is for April 2003 to February 2004 only.
3. Sure Start Maternity Grants were introduced on 27 March 2000. They replaced Maternity Payments.

Source:
DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System.

Winter Payments

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost of extending the £100 announced in the Budget Statement to pensioners aged 65 years and over; and if he will make a statement. [164953]

Malcolm Wicks: The estimated cost of extending the £100 one-off payment to all households containing a person aged 65 or over is £230 million.

Notes:
1. Figure is rounded to the nearest £10 million and is given in 2004–05 prices.
2. Figures exclude cases in residential care or nursing homes.

Source:
Estimate based on DWP administrative data and 2002 based population forecasts from the government actuary's department.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Bailiffs

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister by what procedure certificates are issued authorising private companies to act as bailiffs on behalf of local authorities; and how many companies have *(a)* been refused certification and *(b)* had certification withdrawn in the past year. [164096]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

Certificates are not issued to private companies. Certificates can only be issued to individuals who fulfil the requirements of the Distress for Rent Rules 1988. Statistics are not kept for the number of refusals of certificates. Nine individuals have had their certificate cancelled by a county court judge in the past year.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he has taken to record the *(a)* number and *(b)* nature of complaints against bailiffs employed by local authorities. [164097]

Mr. Raynsford: None. This is a matter for local authorities and the bailiffs they employ.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance his Department issues to local authorities on ensuring that the activities of bailiffs employed by local authorities are in compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998. [164098]

Phil Hope: The former Lord Chancellor's Department published 'National Standards for Enforcement Agents' in April 2002.

Civil Parish (Lancashire)

Mr. Jack: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether the order confirming the creation of the Civil Parish of St. Annes, Lancashire has *(a)* been drafted and *(b)* approved by Ministers; whether he expects that the Civil Parish will be an entity by 1 April; and if his will make a statement on the order making procedure for the creation of the Parish; [164978]

(2) when he expects to make the order confirming the creation of the Civil Parish of St. Annes, Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire; and if he will make a statement. [164979]

Phil Hope: Having received a valid petition, and before making an Order for the creation of a new parish, the Government first consult interested parties on a draft Order, after which the Order, which is not subject to parliamentary procedure, is made.

Following consultation on a draft Order for the creation of the parish of St. Annes, we have decided to defer the making of the Order, to allow Fylde borough council to make the necessary electoral and warding arrangements.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects to make the Order later this year to come into effect on 1 April 2005.

Council Tax

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list, in order of cost by billing authority, the average household council tax level for 2004–05. [164464]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is available in the Library of the House.

Department-Sponsored Bodies

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* total budget, *(b)* funding from his Department, *(c)* administration budget and *(d)* staff cost to his Department of the (i) Go North East—Corus Task Group and (ii) Review of the Planning Inspectorate was in financial years (A) 2002–03 and (B) 2003–04; and if he will make a statement on the (1) current and (2) future work of each body. [163638]

Keith Hill: The information is as follows.

(i) GO North East—Corus Task Group

(a-d) No specific budget has been allocated by the Office for either administration costs or programme costs for this work.

(1) ONE NorthEast (the Regional Development Agency for the North East) in 2000 was asked to lead a Task Group to make a strategic response to the job reductions on Teesside announced by Corus at that time. This group completed its work in 2002. In response to the group's announcements in March and April 2003 on the future of its UK operations and the Teesside steel making facilities, ONE NorthEast reassembled the Task Group to work with the company to help to secure steel manufacturing at Teesside. The group has so far supported

Work to help the development of a business plan for Teesside Cast Products.

Examining a diversification strategy for the supply chain.

A study of the potential for use of any land and premises released.

(2) The group will continue for the foreseeable future, at least until the future of the Teesside steel making operations is settled.

(ii) The Review of the Planning Inspectorate

(a-d) The Review of the Planning Inspectorate was carried out by officials within the of the Deputy Prime Minister, with advice from consultants, directed by a Review Project Board of key stakeholders. The decision to undertake a review of the Inspectorate was made in July 2002. The administration costs to the Office in 2002–03 were £22,150 none of which were pay costs; and in 2003–04 were £144,420 of which £84,700 were pay costs.

(1) The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) plays an essential role in the planning and other land-use related processes in England and Wales, handling planning appeals, development plans and other casework under planning, housing, environment and other relevant legislation. In doing so, it also plays an important part in the achievement of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister PSA targets and the delivery of its sustainable communities programme.

(2) The review demonstrated that PINS has performed well in carrying out its duties, at a time when the volume of planning appeals is increasing. The review makes a number of recommendations on how its business processes might be improved to meet this demand more effectively and to help enable it to play its full part in delivering the Government's programme of planning reform.

The review was completed in October 2003, and the Review Report, together with an Action Plan, was published in February 2004.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* total budget, *(b)* funding from his Department, *(c)* administration budget and *(d)* staff cost to his Department of (i) Regional Housing Boards, (ii) the Buildings Regulations Advisory Committee, (iii) the Community Housing Task Force and (iv) the Home Ownership Task Force were in financial years (A) 2002–03 and (B) 2003–04; and if he will make a statement on the (1) current and (2) future work of each body. [163639]

Keith Hill: The information requested is as follows:

(i) *Regional Housing Boards*

(a-d) There were no identifiable budgets for the Regional Housing Board.

(1) The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received the first Strategies in July 2003 and accepted the broad thrust of the Boards' recommendations for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

(2) Each Board has been asked to develop their Strategy with a view to producing an updated version in early 2005 in order to advise Ministers on how allocations for 2006–07 and 2007–08 should be made.

One of the recommendations in the Barker Review was that Regional Housing Boards and Regional Planning Bodies be merged. The Government intend consulting with key stakeholders to consider how these bodies can be merged, and will come forward with proposals by the summer with a view to implementing them in 2005.

(ii) *The Building Regulations Advisory Committee*

(a-d) The Building Regulations Advisory Committee do not receive Government funding other than the internal costs to the Office of sponsoring this body.

(1) The Building Regulations Advisory Committee was set up under the Building Act 1984 to advise the Secretary of State on the exercise of his power to make building regulations, and on other subjects connected with building regulations. It is currently assisting the Office with reviews of a number of parts the building regulations, including a review of Part B (Fire Safety) and Part C (Conservation of fuel and power).

(2) In the coming year, the Committee will be assisting with new studies, including one on the potential for action through the building regulations to promote economy in the use of water and a review of the application to dwellings of Part M (Access to and use of buildings).

(iii) *The Community Housing Task Force*

(a-d) The administrative budget for the Community Housing Task Force for 2002–03 was £1,064,200 of which £568,800 were staff costs. For 2003–04 the administrative budget was £927,600 of which £620,600 were staff costs.

(1) The Community Housing Task Force is working with 165 local authorities, their tenants and broader stakeholders providing support, advice and building capacity to enable delivery of robust Option Appraisals by July 2005. The Government Offices for the Regions are responsible for assessing and signing off the Options Appraisals submitted. The Options Appraisal process sets out how local stock owning housing authorities together with their tenants will deliver Decent Homes by 2010 considering the various stock investment routes available to them.

(2) No change is envisaged in the Community Housing Taskforce's key role in working with local authorities and tenants in delivering decent homes. However, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the joint working between the Taskforce and Government Offices, the Department is currently considering integrating the Taskforce within the Government Office network.

(iv) *Home Ownership Task Force*

(a-d) The Office provided no direct funding specifically for the Home Ownership Task Force. However, in 2003–04 staff costs of £13,000 were incurred by ODPM in servicing the secretariat.

(1) The Home Ownership Task Force was established by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister in the Sustainable Communities Plan to look at the whole range of programmes aimed at helping social tenants and others into home ownership. The Task Force's work is now complete and its final report "A home of my own" was published on 13 November 2003. Copies of the report and executive summary are available on the Housing Corporation's website at www.housingcorp.gov.uk.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* total budget, *(b)* funding from his Department, *(c)* administration budget and *(d)* staff cost to his Department for the (i) Property Advisory Group, (ii) Residential Property Tribunal Service, (iii) Community Forum and (iv) London Youth Crime Task Force was in financial years (A) 2002–03 and (B) 2003–04; and if he will make a statement on the (1) current and (2) future work of each body. [163641]

Keith Hill: The information requested is as follows:

(i) *The Property Advisory Group*

(a-d) The Property Advisory Group did not have its own budget, but was funded from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister administrative resources. In 2002–03, total administrative costs were £49,570, of which staff costs was £40,557. For the period April to July 2003, the equivalent figures were £23,653 and £14,033.

(1) The Property Advisory Group was wound up in July 2003 following an internal review of arrangements for consulting the property sector. The successor body is the Property Consultative Group.

(ii) *Residential Property Tribunal Service*

(a-d) The Residential Property Tribunal Service total budget for 2002–03 was £7,624,000 of which £7,530,000 was funding by the Office. Of this £1,934,000 was the administration budget all of which were staff costs. The total budget for 2002–03 was £7,822,000 of which £7,722,000 was funding by the Office. Of this £2,247,000 was the administration budget all of which were staff costs.

(1) The Residential Property Tribunal Service (RPTS) determines:

disputes relating to enfranchisement or service charges;

variations of leases previously dealt with at court;

disputes about the new 'right to manage' provision.

(2) The RPTS will also be conferred with additional jurisdictions, including determining breaches of a lease. Provisions in the Housing Bill currently before Parliament also propose to confer new jurisdiction on the RPTS to hear appeals on local authority notices on the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System under Part 1, licensing decisions in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation and other residential properties under Parts 2 and 3, and the making and content of Management Orders under Part 4 of the Bill.

(iii) *The Community Forum*

(a-d) The Community Forum do not receive Government funding other than internal costs to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of sponsoring this body. The total ODPM annual budget for the Forum is £150,000 all of which is staff costs.

(1) The National Community Forum was established in January 2002 to advise the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) and provide a national focus for community involvement.

The Key Objectives of the Forum are:

to act as a sounding board for the NRU by providing a community perspective on Government programmes;

to develop new ideas to help make relevant policy and programmes more effective;

to increase people's understanding of the role of the community in the delivery of neighbourhood renewal.

Alongside the Forum's broader task of advising the NRU on the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, work is carried out in smaller groups, which focus members' energy according to their interests and experience. These groups deal with individual topics, which are structured around the following five central themes:

Tackling the barriers that the benefits system can create for community engagement.

The relationship between Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), Local democracy and Community Networks.

Challenging the mindsets and structural barriers that prevent the engagement of different sectors of the community in neighbourhood renewal.

Participation in community development by Young People.

The impact of the 2004 Spending Review on engagement of the community sector.

(2) In the coming year the Forum will continue with its task of advising the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and its work in smaller groups on individual topics.

(iv) *The London Youth Crime Task Force*

This is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary whose Department funds the Task Force.

Gypsies/Travellers

Mr. Battle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when his review of Gypsy and Traveller community provision will be published. [164459]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's review of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation policy will be completed by the summer.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the costs to *(a)* Devon and *(b)* Cornwall local authorities by the eviction of Gypsies and Travellers in the last three years. [164791]

Yvette Cooper: This information is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Housing

Mr. Love: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he intends to publish a full analysis of the responses to his consultation paper, "Empty Homes: temporary management, lasting solutions". [164652]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will publish an analysis of the responses to the consultation paper, along with our proposals for taking this matter forward, as soon as it is practicable to do so.

Mr. Love: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many respondents to his consultation paper, "Empty Homes: temporary management, lasting solutions", *(a)* supported and *(b)* opposed each of the four options for the new mechanism to bring private sector empty homes back into use. [164653]

Keith Hill: Respondents to the consultation paper were asked to indicate which option, or combination of options, they preferred in respect of a proposed power to enable local authorities to take temporary management control of empty homes. The options were as follows:

Option 1—Leasing to remain a voluntary option;

Option 2—Empty Homes Management Orders linked to the physical condition of properties;

Option 3—Empty Homes Management Orders linked to housing need;

Option 4—Empty Homes Management Orders linked to the physical condition of properties and housing need.

Of the 134 responses received to the consultation paper, 115 answered this question. The responses, according to the options preferred, are summarised as follows:

Option 1—one respondent

Option 2—11 respondents

Option 3—19 respondents

Option 4—30 respondents

Options 2 and 3—42 respondents

Options 3 and 4—three respondents

Options 2,3,4—four respondents

Options 1,2,3,4—one respondent

In addition, four respondents said that they preferred none of the options.

Mr. Love: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library copies of the responses to his consultation paper, "Empty Homes: temporary management, lasting solutions". [164654]

Keith Hill: Copies of the responses to the consultation paper have been made available in the Library of the Houses.

Mr. Love: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the respondents to his consultation paper, "Empty Homes: Temporary Management, Lasting Solutions". [164655]

Keith Hill: Where respondents to the consultation paper provided their name and (where appropriate) the name of the organisation they represented, the information is listed as follows.

Respondents to consultation paper "Empty Homes: Temporary Management, Lasting Solutions"

Pat Smith, Sevenoaks District Council

Karen Cregan, Spelthorne, Borough Council

Isobel Panton, Kennet District Council

Gordon Partridge, Breckland District Council

Tim Clarke, Ipswich Borough Council

Elicia Kimber, South Oxfordshire District Council

Rachel Shalan, Herts, Beds and Bucks Empty Homes Forum

Nigel Kersey, CPRE London

Elizabeth Wrigley, Core Connections

Pardeep Singh, Leicester County Council

John Littlemore, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Bradford District Tenants and Residents Federation

Steve Hawksworth, Telford and Wrekin Borough Council

Jo and Jonathan Ellis

Gwyneth Taylor, Local Government Association

Alison Whiteley, Rushmoor Borough Council

S. J. Melinek

Lisa Wilson, Gateshead Council

Paul Thomson, Bolton At Home

Sadhu Chahal, Swindon Borough Council

Helen Turner, London Borough of Barnet

Tiffany Kearton, Westminster Housing Co-Op

David Firth, Selby District Council

Jim Nolan, Epping Forest District Council

Tara Bradley, Homeless Link

Emma Kumar, Brighton and Hove District Council

Paul Copeland, Wandsworth Council

Dominic Towey, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Sue Questier, Hunts District Council

Nick Davies, London Borough of Brent

Craig Jane, Horizon Housing Group

Sarah Johnson, Colchester Borough Council

Tess Donovan, South Gloucester Council

Joanne Murray, Short-Life Housing

Michael Yeo, Torbay Council

Helen Carlyle, Bath and North East Somerset Council

Helen Caves, Coventry Council
Steven Mcgovern, Mid Sussex District Council
Vicki Dubury, Thanet Council
Jack Dromey, Transport and General Workers Union
Bill Field, Liverpool Council
Martin Parsons, Bromley Council
David Ireland, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Richard Farr, Brentwood Borough Council
Dr. Mark Kleinman, Greater London Authority
Allison Hudson, Stroud District Council
Jane Mcevoy, Luton Borough Council
Peter Bolton King, National Association of Estate Agents
Nick Caprara, London Borough of Harrow
Stephen Edmonds, Darlington Borough Council
David Gibbens, Exeter City Council
Christine Jacobs, London Borough of Lambeth
Dave Chetwyn, Institute of Historic Building Conservation
Ruth Newman, London Borough of Camden
Ian Radcliffe, Corby Borough Council
Carl Price, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Deborah Garvie, Shelter
Anastacia Mulenga, Association of London Government
Pat Taylor, Worthing Borough Council
Liz King, Yorkshire And Humberside Empty Properties Forum
Phil Garland, Swale Borough Council
Anna Ring, British Property Federation
Andrew Dench, Housing Corporation
Richard Price, National Federation of Residential Landlords
Val Dobbs, East Lindsey District Council
Jackie Bennett, Council of Mortgage Lenders
Lorraine Edmondson, Northampton Borough Council
Martin Calvert, Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Paul Stamp, City of York Council
Keith Broxup, Southwark Council
Stephen Clarke, Haringey Council
Richard Parkin, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
James Johnson, East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Tracey Slater, Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Paul Smith, Phoenix Community Housing Co-Operative
Billy Hughes, New Forest District Council
Joanne Craik, South Holland District Council
Phil Toal, Sunderland Housing Group
Dave Adams, Portsmouth City Council
Harry Quarrell, Wycombe District Council
Maggie Jones, Unison
Jenny Harris, National Housing Federation
Jane Mcinerney, London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames
Louise Waring, Royal Town Planning Institute
Derek Welsh, Sunderland City Council
Dan Lucas, Nottingham City Council
Simon Latham, London Borough of Sutton
Bob Osborne, Salford City Council
Alan Savery, Borough of Basingstoke and Deane
Vicki Harris
Jeff Maslen, London Borough of Hillingdon
Dave Carter, London Borough of Enfield
Rachel Shalan, Mid Beds District Council
Erika Grunert, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Lanek Banga, London Borough of Newham
Alison Harrison
Vicki Dubury, Kent Empty Property Officer Forum
Duncan Stone, Guildford Borough Council
Helen Page, Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council
Oliver Foster, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Phil Baker, Hull County Council
Sarah May
James Macdonald, Sanford Housing Co-Op
Cathy Hadfield, Kerrier District Council
Cllr Elizabeth Cartwright, East Hampshire District Council
Sue Cullip, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Mark Gibson, Chartered Institute of Housing
Peter Gaimster, Sussex Empty Homes Forum
Mary Cooch
Andrew Griffiths, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
Wasyl Wolczuk, Gloucester City Council
Rob Pearce, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Keith Gunner, Southampton City Council
Anthony Spencer, Westminster Housing Co-operative
Susan Horrobin, Dover District Council
Graham Rosenberg
Alex Dinsdale, Countryside Alliance
Sarah Ingamells, Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Claire James, Herefordshire Council
Edmee Elias, London Borough of Croydon
Michael Walsh, Birmingham City Council
Alison Thomas, London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Chris Galley, Sheffield Metropolitan District Council
Trevor Sennett
Jeremy Mason, Derby City Council
Keith Gunner and Julia Potter, Strategic Officers Housing Group and Empty Property Forum
Mary Stribling, Eastleigh Borough Council
Peter Gaimster, Eastbourne Borough Council
Nick Caprara, National Association of Empty Property Practitioners
City of Westminster
Empty Homes Agency

Local Government Finance

Mr. Flook: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what new spending obligations his Department has passed to local government in Somerset since 1997; to what extent these new responsibilities have been supported by an increase in central government grant; and if he will make a statement. [164672]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government are committed to fully funding any new responsibilities it places on local government through the New Burdens principle. The Government do not hold information on the extent of new responsibilities in Somerset since 1997. However Somerset has benefited from the 30 per cent. real term increase in overall Government grant for local authorities since 1997, which has enabled local authorities to comply with new responsibilities while continuing to improve services. This grant increase provides funding for the cost

pressures and new burdens on local government including those identified with the Local Government Association in the context of the relevant Spending Review.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the level of external debt was in each local authority in *(a)* Devon and *(b)* Cornwall in each of the last seven years; and what the cost of servicing the debt was in each year. [164793]

Mr. Raynsford: The level of external debt in each local authority in Devon and Cornwall in each of the last seven years is in the following table. Figures for 1998 and 1999 are not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Level of external debt in Devon and Cornwall by local authority at 31 March

£ million

	1997	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Devon	243	309	332	340	368
East Devon	0	1	2	4	6
Exeter	14	13	10	0	0
Mid Devon	5	4	5	5	5
North Devon	12	7	2	0	2
South Hams	12	9	0	0	0
Teignbridge	5	2	4	0	0
Torridge	2	4	5	6	6
West Devon	4	3	3	3	2
Caradon	6	7	7	7	6
Carrick	5	4	4	4	4
Cornwall	133	170	175	200	211
Kerrier	18	13	11	6	6
North Cornwall	3	1	1	1	1
Penwith	0	0	0	0	2
Restormel	5	6	6	14	8

Source:
ODPM monthly and quarterly borrowing returns.

It should be noted that authorities with high levels of debt are generally those which have undertaken capital investment and that long-term borrowing to finance capital expenditure is currently regulated through the issue of credit approvals and, from 1 April 2004, will be subject to the Prudential System.

Figures for external interest payments in each local authority in Devon and Cornwall in each of the last seven years are shown in the following table.

External interest payments in Devon and Cornwall by local authority

£ million

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*[1]
Devon	22.0	15.5	14.4	13.4	13.4	13.4	17.3
East Devon	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Exeter	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8	1.6	0.0	0.0
Mid Devon	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
North Devon	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
South Hams	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Teignbridge	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1
Torridge	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4
West Devon	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.0
Caradon	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.4
Carrick	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Cornwall	10.3	10.5	10.8	11.3	11.6	12.0	12.9
Kerrier	1.7	1.8	1.3	1.3	0.7	0.5	0.5
North Cornwall	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Penwith	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Restormel	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3

[1] Budgeted figures.
Sources:
1997–98 to 2002–03 ODPM Revenue Summary Returns.
2003–04 ODPM Budget Estimate Returns.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the contract for the "Your Say" campaign was put out for tender; how many tenders were received; what the selection criteria were for awarding the contract; when the contract was awarded; and when the contract will terminate. [164804]

Mr. Raynsford: The contract for the Elected Regional Assemblies information campaign was put out to tender on 22 August 2003. Three tenders were received. The selection criteria were best value for money, an understanding of the brief, and the quality of the proposals and the strength of the team from the agency. The contract was awarded in mid September 2003 and will be terminated six to eight weeks before the referendums are held.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister by what means, and at what cost, *(a)* Your Say: A New Opportunity for the North East, *(b)* Your Say: A New Opportunity for the North West, *(c)* Your Say: A New Opportunity for Yorkshire and the Humber, *(d)* Your Say: Business and Jobs, *(e)* Your Say: Assembly Powers and Responsibilities and *(f)* Your Say: Housing, Planning and Transport are being distributed. [164805]

Mr. Raynsford: These leaflets, part of the "Your Say" campaign, are designed to inform people in the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber regions, about the Government's plans to give them an opportunity to vote on whether or not they want to have Elected Regional Assemblies.

They are being distributed by Government Offices in the regions at various public events and are available upon request. They are also on the "Your Say" websites. To date, the only costs incurred in distribution have been to cover delivery to events and postage.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many copies of *(a)* Your Say: A New Opportunity for the North East, *(b)* Your Say: A New Opportunity for the North West, *(c)* Your Say: A New Opportunity for Yorkshire and the Humber, *(d)* Your Say: Business and Jobs, *(e)* Your Say: Assembly Powers and Responsibilities and *(f)* Your Say: Housing, Planning and Transport he intends to distribute; and when he intends to terminate their distribution. [164806]

Mr. Raynsford: These leaflets and fact sheets, part of the "Your Say" campaign, are designed to inform people in the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber regions, about the Government's plans to give them an opportunity to vote on whether or not they want to have Elected Regional Assemblies.

They are being distributed by the Government Offices in the regions at various public events and to individuals or groups upon request. They may also be downloaded from the "Your Say" websites:

www.yoursay-northeast.odpm.gov.uk,

www.yoursaynorthwest.odpm.gov.uk, and

www.yoursay-yorksandhumber.odpm.gov.uk.

Distribution will be in accordance with Section 125(3) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act.

The number of leaflets and fact sheets to be distributed is not fixed. It will be based on demand and the need to ensure that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister discharge the responsibility to inform the public. All the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister communication activity is in line with the Civil Service Code.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister to whom *(a)* Your Say: A New Opportunity for the North East, *(b)* Your Say: A New Opportunity for the North West, *(c)* Your Say: A New Opportunity for Yorkshire and the Humber, *(d)* Your Say: Business and Jobs, *(e)* Your Say: Assembly Powers and Responsibilities and *(f)* Your Say: Housing, Planning and Transport are being distributed. [164807]

Mr. Raynsford: These leaflets, part of the "Your Say" campaign, are designed to inform people in the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber regions, about the Government's plans to give them an opportunity to vote on whether or not they want to have Elected Regional Assemblies.

The leaflets are being distributed by the Government Offices at events and hearings and are available on request. The leaflets and fact-sheets are available on the "Your Say" websites:

www.yoursay-northwest.odpm.go.uk

www.yoursay-northeast.odpm.gov.uk

www.yoursay-yorksandhumber.odpm.gov.uk

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the proposed regional assemblies in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* the North East and *(c)* Yorkshire and the Humber will have borrowing powers. [163715]

Mr. Raynsford: The borrowing powers of elected regional assemblies were set out in Chapter 5 of the White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions", published in May 2002 (Cm 5511).

In summary, the White Paper states that regional assemblies' capital expenditure will generally be funded by central Government grant. But there may be circumstances in which an assembly wishes to borrow to raise money for capital expenditure in addition to that provided by central Government. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister propose to give regional assemblies borrowing powers subject to set limits to fund capital expenditure where they can afford to finance it from their revenue budgets. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also propose to give them temporary borrowing powers for cash management purposes.

Right to Buy

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homes have been purchased under the right-to-buy scheme in each of the last five years. [164202]

Keith Hill: The right-to-buy sales figures for England for the last five complete financial years are in the following table.

	England
1998–99	40,272
1999–2000	54,251
2000–01	52,380
2001–02	51,968
2002–03	63,394

Robson Brown

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the printed material produced by Robson Brown for his Department in the past 12 months; and if he will place a copy of each item in the Library. [164803]

Mr. Raynsford: In the last 12 months Robson Brown have produced the following printed items:

A new opportunity for the North East,

A new opportunity for the North West and,

A new opportunity for Yorkshire and the Humber.

The "Your Say" brand identity guidelines,

note pads,

letterhead,

press notice templates,

leaflet holders, and "Your Say" stickers.

Robson Brown have also designed the three fact sheets:

Business and Jobs,

Assembly Powers and Responsibilities, and

Housing and Transport.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be making copies of the leaflets and the fact sheets available in the Library of the House.

HEALTH

Alcohol

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in arranging a meeting between healthcare professionals and the alcohol industry to discuss health warnings on alcohol products. [162715]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government's alcohol harm reduction strategy for England charges the Department of Health and the Home Office with consulting the alcohol industry on the introduction of a voluntary social responsibility scheme. The strategy recommends that, as part of this scheme, the drinks industry should be strongly encouraged to display information on sensible drinking and on the unit content of drinks. We look forward to working with the industry and other key stakeholders on this voluntary social responsibility scheme.

Alzheimer's Disease

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to issue advice to local authorities on the funding of care for those with Alzheimer's disease. [164259]

Dr. Ladyman: We have no plans to issue specific guidance to local authorities for the funding of care for individuals with Alzheimer's.

BACS

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress his Department has made to manage the changeover from the Bank Automated Clearing System to the new BACSTEL-IP system for electronic payments. [164314]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department has recently purchased BACSTEL-IP software. The software has been successfully tested and we anticipate moving our payments to BACSTEL-IP shortly.

Care Services

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in England are being charged for personal care in *(a)* care homes and *(b)* the community. [164276]

Dr. Ladyman: The estimate for the cost of introducing free personal care was prepared by Department of Health economists using a variety of data and assumptions. An explanatory note is available in the Library.

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make future provision of nursing care given outside hospital free at the point of use; and if he will make a statement. [164277]

Dr. Ladyman: Since the introduction of national health service-funded nursing care in October 2001, people should have access to nursing care from a registered nurse, funded by the NHS, in all settings outside hospital.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to review the level of top-up fees paid by residents of care homes; and if he will make a statement. [164288]

Dr. Ladyman: Generally, care home residents may not top-up their fees from their own resources if they are supported by the local council. The only exceptions are where individuals either are in receipt of the 12 weeks property disregard or have accessed the deferred payment scheme. Some supported care home residents may choose to pay for extras that are not part of their agreed care plan using their own resources. There are no current plans to review the level of top-up fees paid by residents.

"Choosing Health"? Consultation Events

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures his Department is taking to ensure that the public is aware of the choosing health consultation events; what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* hosting and *(b)* advertising such events; and whether the costs will be met by his Department. [160657]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The "Choosing Health"? consultation will be supported by events across the country, organised by the national health service and local authorities, by regional directors of public health with Government offices of the regions, and by the Department of Health and other Government Departments at national level. The consultation process will be managed within existing budgets by the organisation leading the event. Some events will be shaped by initial responses to the consultation, so it is not possible to estimate costs.

We anticipate that other organisations who choose to engage in the debate will also run events, nationally and locally, and encourage their members and contacts to take part.

Organisations will use existing forums for discussion as well as special arrangements for the consultation.

Activities can be publicised on the Department's "Choosing Health"? website, which can be found at www.dh.gov.uk/consultations/liveconsultations. It will be for organisers to determine whether any additional action is needed to promote individual events, for example, targeting key groups or stakeholders.

Clinical Trials

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to encourage the publication of all the results of clinical trials. [164817]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to my response to the hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn) of 10 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1598W.

Dentistry

Mr. Watts: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average income is of *(a)* NHS and *(b)* private sector dentists. [158180]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The average gross fee income of a general dental service (GDS) dentist for national health service work in 2002–03 was £98,000 in England.

Gross fee income of a NHS dentist includes both their personal remuneration as well as business expenses such as staff salaries, laboratory charges and dental consumables.

The income distribution is very wide reflecting the large differences in the amount of GDS work done by individual dentists. Principal GDS dentists do not have a standard working week. They are self employed and choose the amount of GDS work they do. Most dentists will have other income either from private dentistry or from other NHS work. Almost one-quarter of GDS dentists had gross fee income of less than £40,000 in 2002–03; these dentists will have spent only a small proportion of their week doing GDS work.

To produce an income estimate for dentists with a reasonable commitment to the GDS, dentists with gross fee income of less than £55,600 may be excluded. This gives average gross fee income for dentists with a reasonable GDS commitment of £137,000 in 2002–03. The excluded dentists with gross fee income of less than £55,600 will have spent about two days a week or less doing GDS work.

Taking into account estimated expenses, average net fee income of a GDS dentist with a reasonable GDS commitment was around £61,000 in 2002–03. The average GDS net fee income for all dentists including the lowest GDS earners was about £43,000 in 2002–03.

In addition dentists receive other payments such as commitment payments which increase average net income by about £2,000 in 2002–03. So total net income from the GDS averaged about £63,000 for dentists with a reasonable GDS commitment whilst the average net income from the GDS for all dentists including the low GDS earners was about £45,000.

Income of dentists working solely privately is not available. Inland Revenue information for 2001–02 shows that for GDS dentists' average gross income for all self employed work in Great Britain was 163,000 gross or 71,000 net of expenses. This average covers both full-time and part-time dentists.

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the ratio of dentists to population is in each of the primary care trusts in England. [162018]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* England are not registered with a dentist. [162871]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The following table shows the total population, the number of people registered with a dentist under general dental service (GDS) arrangements and, by deduction, the numbers who are not so registered for South Tyneside, Tyne and Wear, the North East and England. Jarrow constituency is covered by South Tyneside Primary Care Trust (PCT).

Number of people not registered with a general dental service (GDS) dentist at 31 January 2004

	South Tyneside[1]	*Tyne and Wear*[2]	*North East*[3]	*England*
Registered GDS patients	86,000	578,000	1,122,000	22,849,000
Population	153,000	1,076,000	2,513,000	48,968,000
Difference	67,000	498,000	1,391,000	26,119,000

[1] Figures cover South Tyneside PCT.
[2] Figures represent the following PCTs: Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland Teaching.
[3] The North East is covered by Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority (SHA) and County Durham and Tees Valley SNA.

Registrations under GDS arrangements cover patients who have been to a general dental service dentist within the past 15 months. They exclude patients who choose to attend occasionally or who have not been to a dentist during the past fifteen months. Patients are able to receive dental treatment without the need for registration from other national health service dental services such as dental access centres, through personal dental services or community dental services. Registrations are included in the area of the dentist. Patients may choose to have their dental services in a different PCT area from the one in which they live.

Departmental Communications

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many staff are employed in the Department to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others; [158166]

(2) what the total expenditure on communications for the Department has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communications Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers.(ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158198]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department currently employs 126 staff in its communications directorate.

57 of these are Government Information and Communication Service staff, of whom 22 are press officers and 35 are employed in marketing communications, web and staff communications activities.

There are 70 other communications staff in the wider Department employed in public health campaigns, national health service and Departmental events and visits, marketing (including print and distribution) and support staff.

The total expenditure on communications directorate staff is £4.09 million, broken down as follows:

£2.63 million for Government information and communication service staff, of which £1.06 million is for press officers and £1.46 million for other staff.

The special advisers code of conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister. This includes communications activity. Details of the costs of special advisers are given on an annual basis. Information for the financial year 2003–04 will be published in due course.

Drug Rehabilitation Treatment (Prisons)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what types of treatment are generally available in prisons for each form of drug addiction; and if he will make a statement. [164247]

Dr. Ladyman: A comprehensive range of drug treatment is available to address the differing needs of drug misusers. The general health examination/assessment a prisoner receives on first reception into custody aims to identify past and present drug usage and engagement with community drugs teams. A clinical decision is then reached about the next steps in the management of each individual prisoner. This can be either detoxification or substitute prescribing, as a prelude to a broader based drug treatment programme.

Counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare (CARAT) service is available in every establishment. CARAT workers, together with healthcare staff where possible, assess a prisoner's treatment needs and devise a care plan based on level of need and time in custody. CARAT provides case management and lower level interventions and is available in all establishments. Intensive rehabilitation programmes are provided through a range of 60 accredited drug rehabilitation programmes, including four therapeutic communities.

Drug Testing

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to review procedures for testing drugs. [163901]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency operates a medicines testing scheme to assess the quality of medicines found on the United Kingdom market.

A review is planned of the current level of sampling used within this scheme.

Fertility Treatment

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many licensed fertility clinics have failed inspection by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority in each of the last five years; [163157]

(2) what plans the Government have to change the rules governing the use of eggs from aborted female foetuses in *(a)* licensed fertility treatments and *(b)* research; [163159]

(3) what studies the Government have commissioned into the long-term effects of invitro fertilisation on *(a)* women and *(b)* children born as a result of the treatment; [163160]

(4) what measures are in place to ensure that human embryos created under a licence issued by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority are not allowed to develop beyond the 14-day statutory time limit; [163163]

(5) what plans he has to require licensed fertility clinics to reimburse the NHS for the cost of treatment arising from multiple births following fertility treatment; [163230]

(6) how many members of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority have declared opposition to destructive embryo research. [163231]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 provides a regulatory framework for the provision of treatment involving in vitro fertilisation (IVF) and human embryo research. These activities are licensed by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA). Inspection of licensed establishments is the cornerstone of the HFEA's work to ensure compliance with Act, the HFEA's code of practice and the conditions upon which the establishment's licence has been granted.

It is not a simple matter of an establishment either "passing or failing" a HFEA inspection. Licensed establishments are expected to operate to set standards and regular inspections take place to ensure these standards are maintained. Where an inspection team considers that an establishment needs to make improvement in a certain area of its operation, a HFEA licence committee that considers the inspection report may decide to attach additional conditions to the licence, with a deadline for implementing improvements if necessary. Failure to comply with the conditions of a licence would be considered by a licence committee and could lead to the revocation of the licence. Were practice to be found of so poor a standard that patients were placed at risk, a licence committee would, as a matter of urgency, consider suspension of the licence and, if necessary, revocation.

The HFEA code of practice sets out standards of conduct and practice that licensed establishments are expected to observe. The new edition of the code, which came into force on 1 March 2004, limits the number of eggs or embryos that can be placed in a woman under age 40, in any one treatment cycle, to a maximum of two. The purpose of this is to limit, as far as possible, multiple pregnancies, which can have a significant medical and social impact on the resulting children and their families, as well as having cost implications for the national health service for the care of the mother and babies. This guidance is supported by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence's guideline on fertility treatment which also recommends that ovarian stimulation should not be offered where the female patient has no fertility problems herself to prevent the risk of a multiple pregnancy. Together these measures should reduce the number of multiple births.

There are no plans to require licensed treatment clinics, a number of which operate within the NHS, to reimburse the health service for costs resulting from the care of multiple pregnancies and births.

The Government have not commissioned any research into the long term effects of in vitro fertilisation (IVF). However, the HFEA has been working with the Medical Research Council to determine what follow-up studies may be needed to assess both the treatments used and any long-term health implications for patients and children born as a result of fertility treatments, including IVF.

When considering applications for embryo research, members of the HFEA are required to reach decisions on the basis of a fair and impartial assessment of the

facts. The HFEA only licences embryo research to take place in circumstances specified by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 and in accordance with the requirements of the Act. No HFEA members have expressed objection to the principles in the Act.

Compliance with the prohibition in section 3(4) of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 on the keeping or using in treatment or research of embryos beyond the 14 day limit is monitored though the HFEA inspection process.

Section 3A of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 prohibits the use in fertility treatment of eggs taken from aborted fetuses. There are no plans to change this. Under the Human Tissue Bill storage of fetal tissue for research purposes would be subject to licensing by the Human Tissue Authority.

Health Development Agency (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the effect on residents of Crosby of the Health Development Agency. [160437]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The work of the Health Development Agency (HDA) is focussed on service delivery that supports the whole of the region's public health development.

Crosby has a number of electoral wards assessed as being in the worst 25 per cent. in England for multiple deprivation. The HDA manages the national healthy school standard, which is part of the Government's national strategy to reduce health inequalities for children. The regional management of the programme is delivered in partnership with Sefton local education authority. In Crosby, 15 out of the 28 schools are included in the (Sefton) national health schools standard programme.

The North West HDA organised the largest ever regional public health conference in March 2004 to address the problem of obesity. Over 300 regional public health professionals, including representatives from health services responsible for Crosby, will learn of the latest obesity data for the region and will collaboratively plan a regional obesity action plan. The workshop will draw together best practice from across the region and in addition to the HDA guidance on obesity, this will provide the basis for local and regional work to tackle obesity in the coming years. The North West HDA is currently working with the North West public health observatory and the regional cancer registries to review the main causes of cancer related deaths across the region.

The HDA, in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University and the North West Public Health Observatory, is currently completing a regional report "Alcohol: A Situational Analysis for the North West".

Healthy Eating Campaign/Living Centres

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to mount a public health information campaign with the aim of *(a)* decreasing meat consumption and *(b)* increasing fruit and vegetable consumption. [164223]

Miss Melanie Johnson: No plans have been made for a health information campaign aimed at decreasing meat consumption. The Department recommends a balanced diet, which can include meat. The Department's "five-a-day" programme aims to raise public awareness of the health benefits of eating at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day and what counts towards "five-a-day". This is supported by a range of information materials, including booklets, posters and leaflets. There is also a "five-a-day" logo for use on promotional materials and on food packets to help consumers choose a diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been allocated in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* in total to healthy living centres. [163654]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department allocates no funding directly to Healthy Living Centres (HLCs). The New Opportunities Fund has committed a total of £204 million to the HLC programme in England and expects all committed funds to have been expended by 2009.

HIV/AIDS

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on *(a)* publicity and health advice and *(b)* treatment of HIV/AIDS in each of the last three years. [163687]

Miss Melanie Johnson: A total of £223.5 million was allocated to the national health service in England in 2001–02 for the treatment and care of people with HIV. £55 million was allocated for local HIV prevention in 2001–02. These sums were added to the general NHS baselines in 2002–03 and are no longer separately identified.

In addition to these NHS allocations, the Department of Health centrally funds national targeted HIV prevention and health promotion campaigns. Expenditure on this national work for the past three years is shown in the table.

	£ million[1]
2001–02	3.60
2002–03	3.80
2003–04	4.35

[1] Figures include expenditure on national telephone helpline provision (including substance misuse and alcohol advice lines).

Immigrant Medical Inspections

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what circulars, guidance and memoranda of understanding he has issued which clarify accountability for services concerned with preventing the importation of infectious disease. [156850]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Public Health (Aircraft) Regulations 1979, the Public Health (Ships) Regulations 1979, and the Public Health (International Trains) Regulations 1994 set out a number of

requirements intended to control the importation of infectious disease. Implementation of the regulations is generally a matter for local authorities, with medical input provided by the national health service.

"Instructions to Medical Inspectors", issued by the Department in 1992, sets out the procedures to be followed by medical inspectors responsible for medical examinations of prospective entrants to the United Kingdom under the Immigration Act 1971. This was supplemented by a letter from the Department in January 2003, which asked that the attention of medical inspectors be drawn to section 133 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 (this section provides a basis for medical inspectors to pass information about those they have examined to others in the NHS).

Liver Disease

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of people in England with hepatitis C who are not being treated; and if he will make a statement. [162069]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department does not hold information centrally about the number of patients with hepatitis C not receiving treatment.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the availability of services for treating liver disease in *(a)* England and *(b)* each region. [162070]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The University of Southampton has recently carried out a survey of health care services for hepatitis C in the United Kingdom on behalf of the British Association for the Study of the Liver, the British Society for Gastroenterology (Liver Section) and the British Liver Trust.

Mental Health Services

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will require records, audited by his Department to be kept of the use of control and restraint on mental health patients. [163559]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not currently keep any central statistical record of the use of control and restraint. Information about the use of control and restraint is collected in a number of ways. Individual authorities are required to have clear policies on the use of restraint which include provision of a review of each incident of restraint, and its application audited and reported to hospital managers (Chapter 19.14 of the Mental Health Code of Practice).

'Developing Positive Practice to Support the Safe and Therapeutic Management of Aggression and Violence in Mental Health Inpatient Settings' was issued by the National Institute for Mental Health in England in February 2004. This guidance makes clear recommendations to services. It states that clinical audit should be an integral part of service culture in order to monitor service responsiveness to the various aspects of patient care.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence will be publishing guidance later this year relating to management of violence.

The National Patient Safety Agency has developed a national reporting and learning system to promote comprehensive national learning about patient safety incidents. This includes reporting of patient safety incidents involving control and restraint. This information will permit feedback to be provided on services and issues to be identified.

From 1 January 2004, the Mental Health Act Commission (MHAC), as part of its programme of monitoring vulnerable patient groups, has asked providers of acute mental health services to notify every occasion when a detained patient sustains an injury which requires medical intervention as a consequence of an incident of restraint. Following notification, the MHAC will seek to arrange for a commissioner to visit the patient concerned and, during the visit collect information regarding the handling of the incident using a specifically designed commission visiting questionnaire. Providers also receive a short report of the commissioner's findings with recommendations for action where applicable.

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken to create an ethnically more diverse workforce in mental health services. [163560]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The need for services to be appropriate and responsive to the communities they serve is laid out in the consultation document, 'Delivering Race Equality: A Framework for Action' (October 2004). To support this, the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) will be developing work to address the cultural capability of organisations, and staff within them, with a clear focus on improving outcomes for those who use services. The importance of this issue is also highlighted in 'Mental Health Services—Workforce Design and Development: Best Practice Guidance (2003).

Linked to 'Improving Working Lives', we have the national 'Positively Diverse' programme to support employers in working towards creating an ethnically more diverse workforce across the whole National Health Service, including mental health services.

The development of black and minority ethnic staff networks at local (trust) and regional levels has also been actively encouraged with seed funding being provided by the Department. In 2002–03, 120 black and minority ethnic staff networks received seed funding through 'Positively Diverse'. All have agreed to report back on good practices, particularly related to the effect on recruitment and retention of staff from black and minority ethnic heritage. The Positively Diverse programme will also be developed within NIMHE to address these issues within the organisation.

Further work is being considered in the light of the 'Delivering Race Equality' consultation responses and the David Bennett Inquiry recommendations.

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to introduce cultural awareness training for all mental health staff along the lines proposed by the independent inquiry into the death of David Bennett. [163563]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute of Mental Health in England's (NIMHE) national workforce programme is developing a set of shared capabilities that all staff should possess as part of their education and training. One of these is to respect diversity and to provide care and interventions in ways that respect and value diversity including age, ethnicity, gender and sexuality.

Further work is being considered in the light of the Delivering Race Equality consultation responses and the David Bennett Inquiry recommendations. Very early discussions have taken place between the Sainsbury Centre and the NIMHE to develop work in this area, building on existing good practice.

Opinion Sampling

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* focus groups and *(b)* opinion polls in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [162757]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A list of the Department's expenditure incurred on focus groups and opinion polls in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04 can only be provided at disproportionate costs.

Over-prescription

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken to reduce the waste arising from the over-prescribing of medicines. [163734]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is concerned about wastage from over-prescribing of medicines and has introduced a number of initiatives to address this. These include; the medicines management collaborative schemes, that demonstrate innovation and good practice in medicines management and the joint medicines partnership task force, that encourages the involvement of patients in their treatment decisions and repeat dispensing which enables the pharmacist to check whether patients still need the medicines prescribed for them. Improved prescribing and medicines management is also being encouraged through the quality and outcomes framework, within the new general practitioner contracts. In hospitals, too, action has been taken to reduce waste, including through the re-use of patients' own medicines and dispensing for discharge.

For the future, the new community pharmacy contractual framework is expected to incorporate services, such as medicines use review, which will support quality prescribing and reduce waste.

Sex Education

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the evidential basis is for the statement by the Chief Medical Officer that there is strong evidence for the effectiveness of sex and relationships education. [162493]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Effective sex and relationships education (SRE) is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, to build up confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity.

The position with regard to SRE in the Chief Medical Officer's Update is informed by high quality reviews of the international evidence. The most recent of these (Swann, C., Bowe, K., McCormick, G., and Kosmin, M. (2003) Evidence-Based briefing paper on teenage pregnancy and parenthood. Health Development Agency) considered the evidence from all high quality systematic and other reviews and meta-analyses published since 1996. They concluded that 'good' evidence (for example, drawn from high quality reviews) exists for the effectiveness of 'school-based sex education', particularly linked to contraceptive services (measured against knowledge, attitudes, delaying sexual activity and/or reducing pregnancy rates). In contrast, there was no good evidence for the effectiveness of abstinence based education (which focuses only on promoting sexual abstinence).

The Health Development Agency was asked by the Department to undertake a review of the research evidence underpinning the teenage pregnancy strategy. They reviewed systematic reviews, meta-analyses and literature reviews of what works to prevent teenage pregnancy, which have been published since 1996. To be included reviews needed to meet strict quality criteria. This document was endorsed by an expert reference group and was subject to external peer review.

Sunbeds

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the *(a)* benefits and *(b)* risks to health of the use of sunbeds. [163892]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department has not made an assessment of whether there are any benefits to health from the use of sunbeds. Reports on the effects of ultra-violet radiation (UVR) from the National Radiological Protection Board, the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection and the British Medical Association conclude that there is no direct evidence that sunbed exposure causes skin cancer.

By far the greatest source of UVR exposure is the sun. That is why we have taken measures to encourage the public to protect themselves and their children from the risks of unsafe exposure to the sun.

The Health and Safety Executive has published guidance for operators and customers of all solaria, including sunbeds. The advice is that people under 16 years old should not use sunbeds and that a limit of 20 sessions per year should be observed. This advice was developed after consultation with leading experts.

Teenage Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS hospital beds are allocated for the treatment of teenage and young adult patients with cancer. [163889]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information is not collected on the number of beds designated for cancer patients. These beds will be included in the overall total of general

and acute beds. Information on the average daily number of beds for each national health service trust is published annually on the Department's website at http://www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/index.htm.

vCJD

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the impact of changes to the levels of funding for vCJD surveillance in 2004–05. [163895]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department will be providing funding of £2,005,594 for 2004–05. This represents an increase of 6.5 per cent. over the funding for 2003–04.

Waiting Times (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on NHS waiting times for heart surgery in Crosby. [160431]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In March 1997 there were 138 people waiting nine months and 40 people waiting over 12 months for heart surgery at the Cardiothoracic Centre—Liverpool national health service trust. The latest available figures show that in January 2004 there were no people waiting nine months and over for surgery.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Careers Service

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received about the future of the careers service in Essex; and if he will make a statement. [163650]

Margaret Hodge: My Department has received four representations about the future of the careers service in Essex—part of Essex Careers Business Partnership (ECBP). Concerns were raised regarding a short fall in the ECBP pension fund and how the future service provided to young people in that locality would be affected.

Pension liabilities, how they are funded and what pension entitlements staff are legally entitled to, are matters for the directors of ECBP and the trustees of the pension scheme. The Department cannot take on the liabilities of private organisations. The Department's primary concern is to maintain continuity of service to young people in England.

Devon LEA

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money was given to schools in the Devon local education authority area from the Capital Modernisation Fund in each of the last seven years. [164785]

Mr. Miliband: The Department for Education and Skills does not hold this information centrally. Capital Modernisation Fund is allocated by projects and not by area.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students living in the Devon local education authority area have benefited from New Opportunities bursaries since the scheme was set up. [164789]

Alan Johnson: Information about Opportunity Bursaries is held at the level of institutions that provide higher education provision. Apart from that, it is not possible to extract from the data the number of awards for students in any given area.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what investment there has been in *(a)* sport and *(b)* music in schools in Devon Local Education Authority in each of the last seven years. [164794]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information is not held centrally. Within the context of the statutory National Curriculum, where music is compulsory for pupils aged 5–14, and Physical Education (PE) is compulsory for pupils aged 5–16, it is for individual schools to use their budgets as they judge appropriate.

The Government are investing more than £1 billion in England to transform PE, school sport and club links. The funding will help deliver an ambitious Public Service Agreement target, shared with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, to increase the percentage of 5–16 year olds who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006.

The Department is providing £1,746,299 to support the delivery of three School Sport Partnerships in the Devon LEA area. The partnerships include 18 secondary and 114 primary schools and provide enhanced sports opportunities for all young people and ensure that their pupils spend a minimum of two hours a week on high quality PE and School Sport.

Furthermore, £3,953,000 is also being provided to to schools in the Devon LEA area specifically to enhance PE and school sport facilities through the New Opportunities Fund.

The Music Standards Fund (MSF) supports Local Education Authority Music Services, which provide activities including workshops, festivals, small group and ensemble tuition and curriculum support. Since 1999, the following MSF payments have been made to Devon LEA Music Service:

in 2003–04: £656,400
in 2002–03: £818,604
in 2001–02: £697,600
in 2000–01: £203,000 plus £121,050
in 1999–00: £124,000 plus £5,047

A total of £646,400 has been allocated for 2004–05.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teaching assistants, *(b)* teachers and *(c)* teaching vacancies there were in schools in Devon Local Education Authority in each of the last seven years. [164796]

Mr. Miliband: The following table shows the number of full-time equivalent teaching assistants, regular teachers and full-time teacher vacancies in maintained schools in the former Devon Local Education Authority area in each January between 1997 and 2003.

	Teaching assistants	Teachers	Teacher vacancies
1997	810	7,700	26
1998	960	7,800	24
1999	1,090	7,890	16
2000	1,250	8,060	59
2001	1,930	8,210	57
2002	2,220	8,430	25
2003	2,670	8,450	6

Sources:
Annual School Census and the annual survey of teachers in service and teacher vacancies (618G).

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the level of local education authority funding is per pupil in Devon for 2004–05; and what the amount spent was in 1996–97. [164798]

Mr. Miliband: The estimated total level of revenue funding per pupil (age 3 to 19) for Devon for 2004–05 is £3,630. Devon's Net Current Expenditure on pre-primary, primary, special and secondary pupils in 1996–97 was £2,220, as recorded by the authority on its RO1 form. The figures are not directly comparable since the former reflects the total provision made available to the authority whereas the latter reflects what the authority actually spent within schools. 2004–05 funding figures are based on pupil numbers used in the Education Formula Spending Share calculation. Expenditure figures are calculated using pupil numbers from the annual school census adjusted to the appropriate financial year.

Education (Greater London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools was in each year since 1997 in (i) Greater London and (ii) each Greater London borough. [163728]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is shown in the table.

Information on class sizes will be updated with provisional 2004 data at the end of April.

Maintained primary and secondary schools: average class size[1] 1997–2000

Position in January each year

	1997		1998		1999		2000	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
London	27.1	21.7	27.2	21.7	27.3	21.8	27.3	22.0
Inner London	26.3	22.4	26.5	22.3	26.7	22.6	26.9	22.3
City of London	26.0	0.0	24.8	0.0	24.7	0.0	26.3	0.0
Camden	27.1	20.3	27.0	19.5	26.8	20.2	27.1	19.8
Hackney	26.1	22.3	25.7	23.6	26.4	23.5	26.6	23.9
Hammersmith and Fulham	25.3	22.6	25.9	22.8	26.1	22.4	26.3	23.0
Haringey	26.9	21.6	27.3	21.6	27.3	21.3	27.7	21.3
Islington	26.6	24.0	27.1	23.9	26.9	23.6	27.1	23.1
Kensington and Chelsea	25.3	20.2	25.5	21.0	25.8	21.5	26.2	21.1
Lambeth	25.2	21.9	25.9	22.4	26.0	22.3	26.2	21.5
Lewisham	26.1	20.7	26.1	20.6	26.4	21.6	26.8	21.1
Newham	27.9	24.5	28.3	24.5	28.3	24.4	28.4	24.0
Southwark	26.4	24.4	26.6	22.4	26.8	23.2	26.7	23.4
Tower Hamlets	26.2	24.0	26.6	24.0	26.7	23.5	26.8	23.4
Wandsworth	25.8	22.0	25.6	22.2	26.0	22.8	26.1	22.4
Westminster	24.2	21.5	24.5	21.6	25.4	22.3	25.6	22.2
Outer London	27.5	21.4	27.6	21.4	27.5	21.5	27.4	21.8
Barking and Dagenham	27.0	20.8	27.0	21.9	27.2	21.9	27.0	21.7
Barnet	26.2	19.8	26.7	20.5	26.9	20.2	27.1	20.2
Bexley	28.8	21.8	29.1	21.9	28.3	21.4	28.3	22.2
Brent	26.5	20.5	26.5	20.2	27.2	20.0	27.4	20.5
Bromley	28.5	20.4	28.6	20.6	27.9	21.1	27.7	20.8
Croydon	28.3	22.2	28.2	22.0	28.0	22.6	27.8	22.9
Ealing	27.1	22.4	27.3	22.2	27.1	22.4	26.9	22.1
Enfield	29.1	20.7	29.0	20.6	28.9	20.9	28.7	21.3
Greenwich	26.0	22.5	25.8	21.6	26.2	21.8	25.9	22.8
Harrow	27.5	22.9	27.5	23.5	27.3	23.4	27.4	23.7
Havering	27.9	21.8	28.0	21.7	28.2	22.7	27.9	22.1
Hillingdon	27.2	21.1	27.3	20.3	26.7	20.7	26.4	20.7
Hounslow	26.8	21.1	26.9	21.6	27.0	21.6	27.1	21.5
Kingston-upon-Thames	29.4	20.2	29.0	21.0	29.3	21.0	28.1	20.9
Merton	27.3	22.7	27.8	22.9	27.2	22.4	26.7	24.1
Redbridge	28.4	21.0	28.6	20.9	28.5	20.9	28.5	21.4
Richmond-upon-Thames	27.2	24.0	27.0	24.1	27.3	23.4	26.7	24.6
Sutton	28.1	20.7	27.8	20.7	27.9	21.2	27.4	21.6
Waltham Forest	26.6	23.6	26.8	22.9	27.0	23.5	27.0	23.4

[1] One teacher classes

Maintained primary and secondary schools: average class size[1] 2001–03

Position in January each year

	2001		2002		2003	
	Primary	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
London	27.0	22.1	26.9	22.1	26.9	21.9
Inner London	26.8	22.4	26.6	22.5	26.6	22.6
City of London	27.6	0.0	n/a	9.9	24.5	0.0
Camden	27.2	20.1	26.9	19.8	26.6	20.0
Hackney	26.2	23.7	26.5	23.4	26.8	22.7
Hammersmith and Fulham	25.9	22.9	25.3	22.5	25.6	22.6
Haringey	27.8	22.1	27.7	22.3	27.7	22.0
Islington	26.6	23.3	26.6	23.3	26.3	23.8
Kensington and Chelsea	26.3	21.2	26.1	21.2	26.0	21.4
Lambeth	26.1	21.7	26.3	20.9	26.1	21.8
Lewisham	26.8	21.6	26.8	21.9	26.6	22.2
Newham	28.3	23.8	28.0	24.0	27.9	23.8
Southwark	26.7	23.7	26.1	23.9	26.0	24.0
Tower Hamlets	26.6	22.9	26.3	23.5	26.8	23.7
Wandsworth	26.0	21.8	25.7	23.0	26.0	22.2
Westminster	25.5	22.0	24.5	21.9	25.5	21.3
Outer London	27.1	21.9	27.0	21.9	27.0	21.7
Barking and Dagenham	26.6	21.5	26.4	21.9	26.3	21.7
Barnet	27.0	20.4	27.1	20.7	27.1	20.0
Bexley	28.0	22.9	27.6	22.5	27.7	22.7
Brent	27.3	22.2	27.1	21.5	27.6	21.3
Bromley	27.4	21.6	27.7	21.3	27.3	21.5
Croydon	27.6	23.0	27.4	23.3	27.1	22.7
Ealing	26.8	22.3	26.6	22.8	26.5	21.9
Enfield	28.4	21.0	28.2	21.5	28.0	21.1
Greenwich	25.7	21.9	25.6	22.4	26.0	22.1
Harrow	26.9	24.1	26.8	23.7	26.4	22.9
Havering	27.3	22.3	27.1	21.8	27.1	21.7
Hillingdon	26.7	21.2	26.8	21.2	26.7	21.0
Hounslow	26.3	21.6	26.9	21.1	26.7	21.3
Kingston-upon-Thames	28.1	20.9	28.1	21.8	28.0	21.8
Merton	26.2	23.7	25.4	22.7	25.4	23.5
Redbridge	28.2	21.6	28.3	20.6	28.0	21.0
Richmond-upon-Thames	26.7	24.6	26.5	23.9	26.5	24.1
Sutton	27.1	21.3	27.2	22.1	27.7	21.0
Waltham Forest	26.8	22.2	26.4	22.6	26.6	22.7

[1] One teacher classes
n/a = not available

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary school and *(b)* secondary school teachers there were per pupil of the relevant age group in Greater London, broken down by local education authority, in each year since 1997. [163731]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is given in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1] pupil:teacher ratios[2]—Greater London 1997 to 2000 position in January each year

	1997		1998		1999		2000	
	Primary	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
London	*21.9*	*15.9*	*22.2*	*16.0*	*22.3*	*16.1*	*22.3*	*16.5*
Inner London	*20.8*	*15.3*	*21.2*	*15.5*	*21.3*	*15.8*	*21.5*	*15.9*
City of London	13.9	0.0	14.3	0.0	14.1	0.0	14.3	0.0
Camden	20.0	14.3	20.2	14.6	20.5	15.2	21.0	15.6
Hackney	19.5	14.9	19.6	14.5	19.7	15.7	20.1	15.5
Hammersmith and Fulham	20.5	17.4	21.0	17.5	21.4	17.5	21.1	18.1
Haringey	21.1	14.6	21.8	14.7	21.5	15.4	22.5	15.5
Islington	21.1	15.7	22.3	16.0	21.6	16.0	21.4	15.9
Kensington and Chelsea	17.7	12.9	18.4	13.4	19.1	14.3	19.4	14.0
Lambeth	19.8	15.0	20.4	14.7	20.5	15.5	20.4	15.2
Lewisham	20.6	15.2	20.7	15.6	20.9	15.7	21.5	15.6
Newham	24.3	16.3	24.4	16.3	25.4	16.4	24.7	16.6
Southwark	21.8	15.8	22.0	15.9	22.0	15.8	22.5	16.2
Tower Hamlets	20.7	15.9	20.8	15.8	20.7	16.0	21.0	16.3
Wandsworth	20.5	15.5	21.2	15.7	21.1	16.1	21.1	16.1
Westminster	18.6	14.9	19.0	15.2	18.6	15.0	18.9	15.1
Outer London	22.5	16.1	22.8	16.2	22.9	16.3	22.8	16.7
Barking and Dagenham	22.7	15.7	23.1	15.8	23.2	16.0	22.9	16.3
Barnet	21.3	14.8	21.4	15.2	21.5	15.3	21.3	15.4
Bexley	24.8	17.4	25.3	17.4	24.5	17.2	24.6	17.6

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1] pupil:teacher ratios[2]—Greater London 1997 to 2000 position in January each year

	1997		1998		1999		2000	
	Primary	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
London	*21.9*	*15.9*	*22.2*	*16.0*	*22.3*	*16.1*	*22.3*	*16.5*
Inner London	*20.8*	*15.3*	*21.2*	*15.5*	*21.3*	*15.8*	*21.5*	*15.9*
Brent	21.9	15.2	21.5	15.0	21.9	15.0	22.0	15.8
Bromley	24.4	16.3	24.8	16.4	24.3	16.6	24.2	17.2
Croydon	23.0	16.2	23.3	16.4	23.5	16.4	23.2	16.9
Ealing	22.5	16.4	22.8	16.9	22.9	16.7	22.8	17.1
Enfield	23.2	15.9	22.8	15.8	23.2	15.9	22.7	16.3
Greenwich	21.1	16.0	21.4	16.3	21.9	16.3	21.4	16.6
Harrow	20.7	15.5	21.5	15.9	21.6	15.9	22.3	16.8
Havering	23.8	16.3	24.2	16.4	24.4	16.6	24.2	16.6
Hillingdon	22.6	16.2	23.4	15.8	23.2	16.3	23.1	16.4
Hounslow	21.5	15.8	21.8	16.2	22.0	16.5	21.9	17.2
Kingston upon Thames	23.9	16.6	24.1	16.4	24.3	16.7	24.1	17.1
Merton	21.7	17.2	22.0	17.0	22.6	17.6	22.1	17.8
Redbridge	22.9	16.5	23.0	16.7	23.0	16.7	23.3	16.8
Richmond upon Thames	21.7	17.0	22.2	16.6	22.4	16.2	22.5	17.9
Sutton	23.9	16.8	23.8	17.0	23.5	17.0	23.1	17.6
Waltham Forest	21.7	15.6	22.4	15.6	22.8	15.7	22.5	16.0

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] The within school pupil:teacher ratio is calculated by dividing the total full time equivalent number of pupils on roll in schools by the total full time equivalent number of teachers with qualified teacher status regularly employed in schools.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1] pupil:teacher ratios[2]—Greater London 2001 to 2003, position in January each year

	2001		2002		2003	
	Primary	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
London	22.5	16.6	22.4	16.6	23.3	16.9
Inner London	21.9	15.9	21.6	16.0	22.6	16.2
City of London	14.7	0.0		0.0	16.7	0.0
Camden	20.9	15.3	20.3	16.0	21.4	14.8
Hackney	21.8	17.1	21.3	16.9	23.5	16.3
Hammersmith and Fulham	21.1	17.5	21.8	17.0	23.2	18.0
Haringey	22.8	15.8	22.7	15.6	23.8	15.3
Islington	22.2	15.9	21.2	16.1	22.7	16.2
Kensington and Chelsea	20.6	15.2	18.9	14.9	20.8	16.9
Lambeth	20.8	15.4	20.7	15.8	21.4	16.2
Lewisham	21.3	15.8	21.3	15.9	20.6	15.4
Newham	24.5	15.8	23.8	16.5	24.9	16.7
Southwark	22.5	16.4	22.0	15.9	22.8	17.1
Tower Hamlets	21.7	16.1	21.7	16.1	22.9	16.2
Wandsworth	21.0	15.8	20.3	16.3	21.4	16.4
Westminster	20.5	15.0	21.4	15.1	22.1	15.6
Outer London	22.9	16.9	22.9	16.8	23.7	17.2
Barking and Dagenham	23.6	16.8	23.6	16.6	24.1	17.4
Barnet	22.2	15.9	22.2	15.7	22.7	15.4
Bexley	24.5	17.8	23.8	17.9	25.1	18.7
Brent	22.3	16.0	21.9	15.7	23.6	16.3
Bromley	23.6	17.1	23.4	17.3	23.7	17.6
Croydon	23.1	17.3	22.8	17.4	22.8	17.3
Ealing	23.1	17.6	23.8	17.8	24.8	17.6
Enfield	22.9	16.3	22.6	16.3	23.6	17.2
Greenwich	21.4	16.0	21.5	15.2	22.8	16.4
Harrow	21.9	17.0	22.7	16.7	23.8	17.3
Havering	23.7	17.2	23.7	17.3	24.2	17.5
Hillingdon	24.0	17.0	24.4	17.3	25.5	18.5
Hounslow	22.2	16.9	22.8	16.8	23.7	17.4
Kingston upon Thames	22.6	16.9	23.8	17.2	23.2	17.1
Merton	21.9	18.0	21.5	17.9	22.7	18.1
Redbridge	23.4	16.7	23.1	16.6	23.2	16.9
Richmond upon Thames	21.9	18.4	21.7	18.3	21.9	17.6
Button	22.9	17.6	23.4	17.7	24.7	17.7
Waltham Forest	23.0	15.8	23.0	16.7	24.5	16.8

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed
[2] The within school pupil:teacher ratio is calculated by dividing the total full-time equivalent number of pupils on roll in schools by the total full time equivalent number of teachers with qualified teacher status regularly employed in schools.
[3] not available
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

The underlying pupil and teacher figures were published on 25 September 2003 in the statistical volume, "Statistics of Education, Schools in England 2003", a copy of which has been placed in the Library. The table is also available on the statistics section of the DfES website at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000417/index.shtml

Education (North Tyneside)

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money was given to schools in North Tyneside local education authority from the Capital Modernisation Fund in each of the last seven years. [164376]

Mr. Miliband: The Department of Education and Skills does not hold this information centrally. Capital Modernisation Fund is allocated by projects and not by area.

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils achieved at least *(a)* one and *(b)* five GCSE grades A* to C in North Tyneside local education authority in each of the last seven years. [164378]

Mr. Miliband: Information on pupils achievement at GCSE/GNVQ are detailed in the following table:

Percentage of 15 year old pupils[1] in North Tyneside LEA

Academic year	*Achieved at least one A*-C*	*Achieved at least 5 A*-C*
1997	66.7	42.7
1998	67.4	44.5
1999	69.2	43.4
2000	70.2	45.2
2001	70.9	46.6
2002	72.9	48.0
2003	71.1	48.2

[1] Pupils are aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August

Free School Meals (Grammar Schools)

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of pupils were eligible for free school meals in maintained grammar schools in England, broken down by those aged *(a)* 11 to 18 years, *(b)* 11 to 15 years and *(c)* 16 to 18 years. [162726]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The requested information is given in the table.

Grammar schools: Number and percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

As at January 2003—England

		Grammar schools[1]	
Pupils aged[3]	*Number of pupils*[2]	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*[2]	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*[2]
11 to 15	110,730	2,550	2.3
16 to 18	39,910	610	1.5
11 to 18	150,640	3,160	2.1

[1] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
[2] Includes pupils with sole and dual (main) registration.
[3] Age as at 31 August 2002.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Further Education Institutions

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with the Central London Learning and Skills Council about the withdrawal of Westminster Kingsway College Further Education College from Battersea. [163482]

Alan Johnson: None. I refer the hon. Member to my reply to his earlier question on 18 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 467W.

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which further education institutions owned buildings *(a)* immediately following incorporation in 1993 and *(b)* in 2003. [163520]

Alan Johnson: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) hold data on which further education institutions owned buildings immediately following incorporation and the numbers of disposals and acquisitions up to and including 2003. This is a matter for the LSC. Mark Haysom the Council's Chief Executive will write directly to my hon. Friend. A copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Internet

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools have access to *(a)* the internet and *(b)* broadband. [164800]

Mr. Charles Clarke: As at April 2002 over 99 per cent. of schools in England had access to the internet.

As at December 2003 49 per cent. of schools (98 per cent. of secondary schools and 41 per cent. of primary schools) have access to broadband. The Government's target is to connect all schools to broadband by 2006.

Learning and Skills Councils

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which functions of learning and skills councils would be transferred to regional assemblies. [164547]

Alan Johnson: In our White Paper 'Your Region, Your Choice' we set out proposals for each Assembly to appoint two members to the Board of each local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in its region, and for the national LSC to consult Assemblies on its guidance to the local LSCs. We also propose that local LSCs will be required to have regard to Assembly strategies, including in drawing up their spending plans; and to consult the relevant Assembly about their local plans.

Looked-After Children

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many year 11 looked-after children *(a)* did not sit any examinations, *(b)* obtained no qualifications, *(c)* obtained one GCSE or GNVQ and *(d)* obtained at least five GCSEs (or equivalent) grades A* to C broken down by local authority, in each year since 1994; and what the equivalent figures were for all children. [158067]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

Middle Schools

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which local education authorities have *(a)* middle schools, *(b)* planned re-organisation that revives middle schools and *(c)* signified their agreement to his plans for middle schools. [164499]

Mr. Miliband: The following local education authorities have middle schools:

Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Devon, Dorset, Harrow, Hertfordshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Kirklees, Leicestershire, Milton Keynes, Newcastle upon Tyne, Norfolk, North Tyneside, North Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Poole, Somerset, Staffordshire, Suffolk, West Sussex, Wiltshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, Worcestershire.

The Isles of Scilly, Hammersmith and Fulham, Nottinghamshire, Sheffield, and Surrey also have individual "all-through" schools, which cater for primary and secondary pupils, and are classified as middle schools under the 1996 Education Act

The Department has not been informed of any planned reorganisations which would involve the introduction of new middle school provision.

The Secretary of State has no plans for middle schools. The organisation of school provision is a local matter. Local education authorities have overall responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient schools to meet local needs and final decisions on proposals to change the pattern of provision would be made by the local School Organisation Committee (SOC) or schools adjudicator.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his Department's policy is on the viability of middle schools within his plans for secondary education. [164500]

Mr. Miliband: The organisation of school provision, including the viability of schools, is a local matter. The Department does not promote a particular organisational model since this depends on the needs and circumstances of an area. Our plans for transforming secondary education remain fixed on improving teaching and learning supported by a drive for building strong school leadership teams; specialism and collaboration; reforming the school workforce and developing partnerships beyond the classroom. Whatever the pattern of local school provision, our aim is that all schools should be equipped to personalise learning to ensure high expectations for all, based on a sound knowledge and understanding of each child's learning needs.

Pay

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to reduce the pay gap in the higher education sector. [164769]

Alan Johnson: As the employers, higher education institutions (HEIs) are responsible for pay in higher education. However, we do recognise that Government funding plays a part in what institutions can pay their staff.

We have invested nearly £330 million from 2001–02 to 2003–04 through the Rewarding and Developing Staff (RDS) initiative to help HEIs increase their human resource capability. One of the six priority areas that HEIs need to address in their human resource strategies is the development of equal opportunity targets, including ensuring equal pay for work of equal value.

RDS sits within the broader context of Government funding in higher education. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) are allocating almost £6 billion of grants for 2004–05, a 9.3 per cent. increase on 2003–04. Within that, funding for teaching is increasing by 5.6 per cent. The 2004 Spending Review settlement, announced on 17 March, will allow investment in the sector to continue to grow in real terms.

Primary School Age

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Gloucestershire were of primary school age on the latest date for which figures are available. [164111]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 29 March 2004]:* The mid-2002 population estimate[1] for children aged 5 to 11 in Gloucestershire is 49,300[2]. The estimate[1] for those aged 1 to 4 is 25,800[3].

[1] These estimates will not match the age groups in primary and nursery schools exactly.

[2] The figure for children aged 5 to 11 includes some children aged 5 who were not of compulsory school age at the start of the summer term, and some children aged 11 with birthdays in July and August who have completed their primary schooling.

[3] Annual population estimates at LEA level are not published in more detail than the 1 to 4 age group.

Qualifications

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils in *(a)* Blackpool and *(b)* Lancashire local education authorities left school with no qualifications in each year since 1997. [164553]

Mr. Miliband: Information on pupils leaving school is not available, however, the percentage of 15 year old pupils that failed to achieve a pass at GCSE or GNVQ are detailed in the following table:

Percentage of 15 year old pupils[1] achieving no passes in GCSE/GNVQ

Percentage

Academic Year	*Blackpool*[2]	*Lancashire*
1998	6.9	5.1
1999	7.3	4.6
2000	6.3	4.3
2001	6.7	4.2
2002	4.9	4.0
2003	6.0	4.6

[1] Pupils are aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August.
[2] Due to local government reorganisation figures are not available for Blackpool for 1997.

Remodelling Change Programme

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of whether the Government is on target to meet the commitments identified in paragraph 15 on page 4, Appendix 1 on page 28 and in the table on page 29 in, Raising standards

and tackling workload: a national agreement, for schools' Remodelling Change Programme; and if he will make a statement. [164458]

Mr. Miliband: The Government is committed to sustaining school workforce reforms. The manifesto commitment to 10,000 extra teachers during the life of the Parliament has already been exceeded; and there were 36,000 more support staff in post in January 2003, compared with January 2001. In October 2003, the Secretary of State announced a package of measures that will restore stability to the school funding system, including the introduction of a 4 per cent. minimum per pupil guarantee for schools.

In addition, the National Remodelling Team, working with the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group and a network of dedicated LEA advisers, has developed advice and support for schools in managing the reforms effectively, including through the provision of training for support staff. Many schools are also currently involved in a tailored change management process.

Salisbury College

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement about *(a)* the funding situation and *(b)* staffing prospects at Salisbury College. [163674]

Alan Johnson: The Department allocates funds to the Learning and Skills Council for the provision of education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector. The Department does not provide a specific budget to the LSC for individual colleges. It is for the Learning and Skills Council to determine for itself the right level of investment in institutions from the funds allocated to it for learning participation. Mark Haysom, the council's chief executive, will write to the hon. Member providing details of the funding situation of Salisbury College. A copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Colleges are independent corporations and, as such, employment issues are an internal matter for the college.

School Nurses

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school nurses there are, broken down by education authority. [164814]

Mr. Miliband: The following table gives the number of full-time equivalent number of matrons, nurses and other medical staff in maintained primary, secondary and special schools in England broken down by local education authority at January 2003, the latest information available.

Special schools in England	*Number*
England	1,538
North East	28
Darlington	0
Durham	1
Gateshead	3
Hartlepool	0
Middlesbrough	4
Newcastle upon Tyne	0
North Tyneside	5
Northumberland	3
Redcar and Cleveland	1
South Tyneside	5
Stockton-on-Tees	1
Sunderland	6
North West	187
Blackburn with Darwen	0
Blackpool	2
Bolton	8
Bury	9
Cheshire	16
Cumbria	10
Halton	3
Knowsley	2
Lancashire	14
Liverpool	6
Manchester	20
Oldham	55
Rochdale	2
Salford	0
Sefton	2
St. Helens	4
Stockport	3
Tameside	16
Trafford	3
Warrington	4
Wigan	2
Wirral	5
Yorkshire and The Humber	115
Barnsley	5
Bradford	9
Calderdale	4
Doncaster	9
East Riding of Yorkshire	9
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	3
Kirklees	6
Leeds	20
North East Lincolnshire	8
North Lincolnshire	4
North Yorkshire	11
Rotherham	6
Sheffield	5
Wakefield	12
York	4
East Midlands	84
Derby	11
Derbyshire	18
Leicester	22
Leicestershire	5
Lincolnshire	7
Northamptonshire	10
Nottingham	2
Nottinghamshire	9
Rutland	0
West Midlands	112
Birmingham	30
Coventry	3
Dudley	6
Herefordshire	0
Sandwell	2
Shropshire	15
Solihull	10
Staffordshire	4
Stoke-on-Trent	0
Telford and Wrekin	5
Walsall	3
Warwickshire	20
Wolverhampton	2
Worcestershire	13

Special schools in England	Number
East of England	132
Bedfordshire	11
Cambridgeshire	12
Essex	31
Hertfordshire	48
Luton	13
Norfolk	8
Peterborough	1
Southend-on-Sea	4
Suffolk	4
Thurrock	1
London	375
Inner London	73
Camden	2
City of London	0
Hackney	2
Hammersmith and Fulham	2
Haringey	27
Islington	4
Kensington and Chelsea	0
Lambeth	4
Lewisham	7
Newham	6
Southwark	0
Tower Hamlets	0
Wandsworth	19
Westminster	1
Outer London	302
Barking and Dagenham	1
Barnet	16
Bexley	4
Brent	32
Bromley	10
Croydon	12
Baling	24
Enfield	34
Greenwich	19
Harrow	41
Havering	3
Hillingdon	57
Hounslow	26
Kingston upon Thames	0
Merton	3
Redbridge	5
Richmond upon Thames	5
Sutton	2
Waltham Forest	8
South East	427
Bracknell Forest	2
Brighton and Hove	4
Buckinghamshire	189
East Sussex	26
Hampshire	52
Isle of Wight	4
Kent	36
Medway	4
Milton Keynes	11
Oxfordshire	13
Portsmouth	6
Reading	7
Slough	6
Southampton	6
Surrey	20
West Berkshire	2
West Sussex	37
Windsor and Maidenhead	2
Wokingham	2
South West	77
Bath and North East Somerset	2
Bournemouth	1
Bristol, City of	2
Cornwall	6
Devon	6
Dorset	4
Gloucestershire	13
Isles of Scilly	0
North Somerset	6
Plymouth	2
Poole	2
Somerset	16
South Gloucestershire	1
Swindon	6
Torbay	1
Wiltshire	8

Source:
Annual Schools' Census.

Schools (Absenteeism)

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many fixed penalty notices have been issued in relation to condoned absenteeism of pupils; and if he will make a statement. [164463]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This measure only commenced on 27 February 2004. Information about the number of penalty notices issued for truancy is not available at present.

Teachers Pension Scheme

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many female teachers were making a contribution of 6 per cent. to the teachers' pension scheme between 1972 and 1988; and if he will make a statement. [164465]

Mr. Miliband: The table shows the number of female teachers who were in pensionable employment in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (England and Wales) in each of the years between 1972 and 1988 inclusive.

	Female teachers
1972	263,000
1973	290,000
1974	300,000
1975	316,000
1976	331,000
1977	331,000
1978	335,000
1979	346,000
1980	351,000
1981	351,000
1982	344,000
1983	344,000
1984	342,000
1985	343,000
1986	347,000
1987	364,000
1988	356,000

Source:
Database of Teachers' Records

All members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (IPS) pay the same main scheme contribution of 6 per cent. The TPS has options for individual scheme members to pay, on a voluntary basis, a higher contribution in order to purchase additional benefits within the scheme.

The TPS is a group scheme where the cost of scheme benefits is shared between employers and employees, with the greater part being met by employers. All TPS employers pay the same contribution rate which is currently 13.5 per cent. Between 1972 and 1988, the scheme has provided automatic family benefits for married male teachers and female teachers with a financially dependent husband. In 1988, the scheme was extended to provide automatic family benefits cover for all married teachers.

Teaching Assistants

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teaching assistants were employed in *(a)* Blackpool and *(b)* Lancashire local education authorities in each year since 1997. [164552]

Mr. Miliband: The following table gives the numbers of full time equivalent teaching assistants in maintained schools in Blackpool and Lancashire local education authorities for each year between 1997 and 2003, the latest year for which data are available.

	Former Lancashire	*Lancashire*	*Blackpool*
1997	1,780	—	—
1998	2,000	—	—
1999	—	1,670	190
2000	—	1,830	220
2001	—	2,190	290
2002	—	1,960	190
2003	—	3,130	390

Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Undergraduates

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many undergraduates were at universities in England in each academic year since 1997. [161612]

Alan Johnson: The available information is given in the table.

Undergraduate enrolments to English HE institutions[1]

Academic year	*Numbers*
1997–98	1,172,877
1998–99	1,195,620
1999–2000	1,198,003
2000–01	1,229,549
2001–02	1,263,498
2002–03	1,328,625

[1] Figures include enrolments to the Open University.
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many undergraduates dropped out of undergraduate studies in each year since 1997. [162036]

Alan Johnson: The latest available figures giving non-completion rates for students starting full-time first degree courses in the UK are as follows:

Non-completion for students starting full-time first degree courses in the UK

Students starting courses in:	[1] *Non-completion rate (percentage)*
2000–01	16
1999–2000	17
1998–99	17
1997–98	17

[1] Non-completion is regarded as those who do not gain a qualification from their original course or from any other course and do not transfer to another institution.
Source:
HEFCE Performance Indicators

Figures published in 2003 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) show that the UK as a whole has one of the lowest non-completion rates among OECD countries.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 1 April 2004

WALES

Civil Servants

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many civil servants have been employed in the Wales Office in each year since 1999 in *(a)* London and *(b)* Cardiff. [160935]

Mr. Touhig: The actual number of civil servants in the Wales Office and the split between London and Cardiff could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The table as follows shows the staffing complement in each year, since the Wales Office came into being on 1 July 1999. This differs from the outturn figures given in the Wales Office annual Departmental Reports as it takes no account of vacancies during the year.

	Staff complement in London (full time equivalents)	*Staff complement in Cardiff (full time equivalents)*
1999–2000	33	3
2000–01	35	9
2001–02	35	9
2002–03	43	12
2003–04	44	11

Wind Farms

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment he has made of the *(a)* environmental and *(b)* health impact of wind farms in Wales. [164591]

Mr. Touhig: Proposals for the development of wind farms in Wales are assessed for visual and other impacts as part of the planning process.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Children in Care

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children are in residential care in each local authority area; and how many receive residential care in each local authority. [159417]

Margaret Hodge: The number of children in residential care in each local authority at 31 March 2002 is shown in the following table.

Children Looked After at 31 March 2002 in residential care[1,2]

Local authority	*Children Looked After in residential care at 31 March 2002*[2,3]
England	8,600
North East	
Shire counties	
Durham	65
Northumberland	40
Unitary authorities	
Darlington	20
Hartlepool	10
Middlesbrough	25
Redcar and Cleveland	15
Stockton-on-Tees	35
Metropolitan districts	
Gateshead	35
Newcastle upon Tyne	55
North Tyneside	45
South Tyneside	35
Sunderland	80
North West	
Shire counties	
Cheshire	45
Cumbria	40
Lancashire	245
Unitary authorities	
Blackburn and Darwen	50
Blackpool	30
Halton	15
Warrington	20
Metropolitan districts	
Bolton	40
Bury	20
Manchester	150
Oldham	45
Rochdale	30
Salford	110
Stockport	55
Tameside	25
Trafford	45
Wigan	55
Merseyside	
Metropolitan districts	
Knowsley	30
Liverpool	175
Sefton	85
St. Helens	55
Wirral	75
Yorkshire and Humberside	
Shire counties	
North Yorkshire	40
Unitary authorities	
East Riding of Yorkshire	30
Kingston upon Hull	90
North East Lincolnshire	25
North Lincolnshire	30
York	20
Metropolitan districts	
Barnsley	55
Bradford	100
Calderdale	30
Doncaster	55
Kirklees	50
Leeds	170
Rotherham	45
Sheffield	95
Wakefield	50

Children Looked After at 31 March 2002 in residential care[1,2]

Local authority	*Children Looked After in residential care at 31 March 2002*[2,3]
East Midlands	
Shire counties	
Derbyshire	75
Leicestershire	35
Lincolnshire	55
Northamptonshire	95
Nottinghamshire	45
Unitary authorities	
Derby	45
Leicester	50
Nottingham	75
Rutland	—
West Midlands	
Shire counties	
Shropshire	30
Staffordshire	70
Warwickshire	35
Worcestershire	55
Unitary authorities	
Herefordshire	15
Stoke-on-Trent	55
Telford and Wrekin	35
Metropolitan districts	
Birmingham	305
Coventry	55
Dudley	45
Sandwell	50
Solihull	30
Walsall	65
Wolverhampton	35
South West	
Shire counties	
Cornwall	70
Devon	70
Dorset	25
Gloucestershire	60
Isles of Scilly	0
Somerset	65
Wiltshire	40
Unitary authorities	
Bath and North East Somerset	15
Bournemouth	35
Bristol	70
North Somerset	15
Plymouth	40
Poole	15
South Gloucestershire	20
Swindon	25
Torbay	30
Eastern	
Shire counties	
Bedfordshire	70
Cambridgeshire	55
Essex	175
Hertfordshire	115
Norfolk	145
Suffolk	100
Unitary authorities	
Luton	25
Peterborough	35
Southend	25
Thurrock	25

Children Looked After at 31 March 2002 in residential care[1,2]

Local authority	*Children Looked After in residential care at 31 March 2002*[2,3]
London	
Inner London	
Camden	65
City of London	0
Greenwich	95
Hackney	70
Hammersmith and Fulham	55
Islington	125
Kensington and Chelsea	45
Lambeth	185
Lewisham	125
Southwark	90
Tower Hamlets	80
Wandsworth	45
Westminster	35
Outer London	
Barking and Dagenham	115
Barnet	50
Bexley	10
Brent	75
Bromley	70
Croydon	70
Baling	70
Enfield	65
Haringey	155
Harrow	25
Havering	35
Hillingdon	70
Hounslow	50
Kingston Upon Thames	25
Merton	20
Newham	65
Redbridge	30
Richmond upon Thames	40
Sutton	15
Waltham Forest	100
South East	
Shire counties	
Buckinghamshire	35
East Sussex	40
Hampshire	120
Kent	125
Oxfordshire	80
Surrey	130
West Sussex	115
Unitary authorities	
Bracknell Forest	20
Brighton and Hove	25
Isle of Wight	15
Medway Towns	30
Milton Keynes	40
West Berkshire	20
Portsmouth	35
Reading	25
Slough	20
Southampton	20
Windsor and Maidenhead	15
Wokingham	10

[1] Residential care includes secure units, homes and hostels, residential schools, and other residential settings.

[2] Figures in this table exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements.

[3] Figures over 1,000 are rounded to the nearest 100. Figures between one and five have been suppressed. All other figures are rounded to the nearest five.

Source:

Children Looked After by local authorities, year ending 31 March 2002.

Adult Learning

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people are claiming Adult Learning Grants in pilot areas; and what estimate he has made of the number of people eligible to claim Adult Learning Grants in pilot areas. [16379

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Over 1,900 people have successfully applied for the Adult Learning Grant and more applications are being approved every week. The latest estimate is that some 5,700 adults may be eligible for the grant in the pilot areas.

Arson

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost of arson damage to schools was in each of the last 15 years. [164950]

Mr. Miliband: Because the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has overall policy lead for fire safety and arson reduction among government departments, it is ODPM rather than this Department that compiles statistics on fires in schools.

The latest figures we have from ODPM cover the years 1997–2001. They show that, on average, the annual economic costs of arson damage to schools amounted to £42 million. The numbers of school fires started deliberately did not increase steadily over that period, but fluctuated around the average of 972 per year.

Asbestos

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of buildings occupied by *(a)* staff of his Department and *(b)* staff of the Department's executive agencies have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to the implementation of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159662]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: All of the Department for Education and Skills buildings were surveyed prior to the introduction of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. The surveys complied with the requirements of the regulations current at that time.

Bullying

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many incidences of bullying in schools were recorded in Devon in the last seven years. [164799]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Data on bullying is not collected centrally and there is no reliable basis for an estimate of prevalence. However, any level of bullying is too high and we are determined to help schools to tackle the problem. Our guidance pack 'Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence' and the anti-bullying website www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying offer detailed advice on preventing and addressing bullying. We have also recently launched our anti-bullying Charter which I hope schools will sign and use. It is accompanied by a summary of effective practice to help schools review and enhance their anti-bullying policies. We are also currently running a series of England-wide regional anti-bullying conferences for schools and other partners to share good practice.

Children's Homes

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* private and *(b)* public sector children's homes there are in each local authority area. [159415]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is not available as it is not collected by Local Authority area. The National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) collects information on an Area and Regional basis. Details of numbers of children's homes at 27 February 2004, by type of provider and NCSC Region are set out in the following table:

Number of Children's homes by provider type across NCSC Regions at 27 February 2004

NCSC Region	*Independent*	*Local Authority*	*Voluntary*	*NHS*	*Providers Total*
England					
North East	32	70	2	2	106
East Midlands	64	46	6	0	116
South West	160	49	19	1	229
West Midlands	160	46	11	0	217
North West	223	119	34	0	376
London	121	50	23	2	196
South East	153	46	16	1	216
Eastern	64	33	8	0	105
Yorkshire and Humberside	50	95	8	0	153
Total	1,027	554	127	6	1,714

Source:
NCSC

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many privately run children's homes are registered. [159416]

Margaret Hodge: 1,027 private children's homes were registered with the National Care Standards Commission at 27 February 2004.

Citizenship Curriculum

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to increase time spent on learning about court processes in secondary schools. [164196]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Understanding the role and operation of the criminal and civil justice system in our

democracy is an important part of citizenship education, which became part of the curriculum for 11 to 16-year-olds in September 2002. Pupils learn about the work of the courts, parliament and the government in making and shaping the law. It is up to schools to arrange the allocation of time for subjects and specific elements within them. The QCA has sent detailed guidance on citizenship to all schools, which includes specific units on how to plan and cover the justice system.

Computer Misuse

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many cases of computer misuse there were in his Department in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003, broken down by category of misuse; and how many of those cases resulted in disciplinary action. [163276]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department for Education and Skills allows personal use of the internet and email outside normal hours. Staff are warned that internet accesses may be monitored and misuse may lead to disciplinary action. Staff are reminded of the policy each time they log on to the Department's network and must accept the policy before log in can be completed.

The numbers of cases of computer misuse within the Department for Education and Skills is as follows:

	Number of cases	*Type of misuse*	*Action*
1997	0	n/a	n/a
2003	2	Serious inappropriate internet use	Disciplinary

Access to the internet for DfES staff was introduced in November 1997 and was approved only to those who had a business need. Usage was low and no instances of misuse occurred.

Departmental Buildings

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* renovation and *(b)* maintenance projects on buildings (i) owned and (ii) rented by his Department were undertaken in each of the last five years; and what the associated costs were of each. [163949]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department's renovation costs include projects where the primary aim is refurbishment and upgrading, while maintenance costs include projects where the primary aim is repair and/or replacement of existing equipment/installations.

The project cost of the *(a)* renovation and *(b)* maintenance work carried out in each of the last five years is as follows:

£

Financial year	*Leasehold*		*Freehold*	
	Renovation	*Maintenance*	*Renovation*	*Maintenance*
2003–04	3,231,704	478,398	1,564,000	433,085
2002–03	2,811,781	1,283,864	1,982,775	380,070
2001–02	2,445,073	1,432,309	1,967,745	479,095
2000–01	2,993,645	800,959	2,164,164	1,244,123
1999–2000	3,099,315	883,208	1,633,944	1,200,535
Total	14,581,518	4,878,738	9,312,628	3,736,908

Devon LEA

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils achieved at least *(a)* one and *(b)* five GCSE grades A* to C in Devon Local Education Authority in each of the last seven years. [164795]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is in the following table:

Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] in Devon Local Education Authority

Percentage

Academic year	*Achieved at least one A*-C*	*Achieved at least 5 A*-C*
1997[2]	71.4	44.0
1998	75.6	47.0
1999	75.1	48.4
2000	76.3	49.1
2001	77.0	51.3
2002	74.8	50.4
2003	76.2	52.6

[1] Pupils are aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August.
[2] Results for 1997 are not directly comparable to 1998–2003 results, due to the re-organisation of Devon LEA that took place in 1998.

Education (North Tyneside)

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the level of capital investment in schools in North Tyneside was in each of the last seven years. [164361]

Mr. Miliband: The following table shows capital funding allocated to North Tyneside local education authority (LEA) and its schools since 1997. The majority of capital funding is now allocated by formulae, linked to Asset Management Plans. All schools have, since 2000–01, received Devolved Formula capital to use on their most urgent capital needs.

Capital allocations to North Tyneside LEA

	Allocations (£000)
1997–98	2,521
1998–99	2,448
1999–2000	10,255
2000–01	19,766
2001–02	22,449
2002–03	[1]45,512
2003–04	11,528

[1] This includes £33.5 million PFI credits.

Note:
The calculation includes the Voluntary Aided sector. Funding from 2000- 01 to 2002 03 included high levels of Basic Need and also additional exceptional funding.

Employment Agencies

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the employment agencies which his Department and its predecessors have used to supply temporary staff in each financial year since 1996–97 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [163813]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The following table lists all the employment agencies used by the Department for Education and Employment and Department for Education and Skills from 1996–97 to date:

	Employment agency
1996–97	Adecco Brook Street
1997–98	Adecco Brook Street
1998–99	Adecco Brook Street
1999–2000	Adecco Brook Street
2000–01	Adecco Brook Street Manpower
2001–02	Adecco Brook Street Manpower
2002–03	Adecco Brook Street Manpower
2003–04	Adecco Brook Street Manpower

Free School Meals

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost of free school meals was per child, broken down by local education authority, in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [165029]

Mr. Miliband: This information is not collected centrally.

Gap Year

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will commission research into the number of post-A level students who take a gap year before entering university over the next three years in order to help evaluate the impact of changes in higher education student fees and indebtedness. [163989]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government will continue to monitor the number of students accepted to university with deferred entry, as made available by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).

In addition information will be available through the independent commission established to consider all aspects of the new arrangements based on the first three years of variable fees. The Terms of Reference of this commission were announced by the Secretary of State on 26 January 2004.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* proportion and *(b)* number of post-A level students took a gap year before entering university in each of the last five years. [163991]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The available information comes from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and covers deferred entry for 18-year-old, full-time, accepted applicants to first degree and HMD study in the UK. Figures are in the following table.

UK domiciled 18-year-old applicants, accepted through UCAS with deferred entry

Year of application	*Total accepted applicants*	*Total accepted on deferred basis*	*Percentage deferred*
1998/99	148,301	14,261	9.6
1999/00	146,670	14,975	10.2
2000/01	147,986	16,007	10.8
2001/02	156,790	18,840	12.0
2002/03	161,032	19,600	12.2

Source:
UCAS.

This information excludes students who defer making their application to UCAS until they are already taking a gap year.

Healthy Eating

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what meetings he has had with the *(a)* retail and *(b)* food and drink industry to discuss healthy eating in schools. [165033]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has had several meetings with the retail and food industries to discuss healthy eating in schools.

Individual Learning Accounts

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to compensate companies forced to close due to the termination of individual learning accounts. [164783]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Department has no plans to compensate learning providers in relation to their participation in the individual learning accounts (ILA) programme following the closure of the programme on 23 November 2001. The extent to which organisations made business decisions around ILA participation is something each organisation determined for itself.

Isle of Wight Youth Trust

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what grants he has paid to the Isle of Wight Youth Trust, Wight2BHeard, in each of the last three years; and under what programme. [162764]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* During the last three years I have made no payments to the Isle of Wight Youth Trust, Wight2BHeard.

Opinion Sampling

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his estimate is of total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* focus groups and *(b)* opinion polls in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [162754]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department commissions tightly focused market research to help with the strategic development of publicity campaigns and their evaluation. The expenditure on opinion and market research projects for the years since 1995 is listed in the following table. Information is not held in a form which would allow the projects to be differentiated into the categories requested; some would involve a combination of methodologies.

	£000
1995–96	596
1996–97	647
1997–98	863
1998–99	1,409
1999–2000	1,687
2000–01	2,340
2001–02	1,256
2002–03	2,078
2003–04 (to date)	1,564

Overseas Employees

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many nationals of sub-Saharan African countries are employed by *(a)* state schools, *(b)* local education authorities and *(c)* his Department (i) directly and (ii) through private agencies. [164421]

Mr. Miliband: Information on the nationality of employees in state schools, local education authorities and this department is not collected centrally.

Overseas Students

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in higher education are from each EU country; what proportion from each country are assisted from public funds to meet the cost of fees or maintenance; and to what extent. [164081]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* The Government are required under Article 12 of the EC Treaty to treat EU students no less favourably than UK students with regard to tuition fees. EU students make a means-assessed contribution to their tuition fees, with the remainder being made up by the Government (via HEFCE). EU students are not entitled to receive support with maintenance costs.

Table A shows the number of full-time undergraduate students enrolled in England and Wales in 2002/03 by domicile. The percentages refer to the numbers of students qualifying for assistance with the means-assessed element of the tuition fees.

The percentage number of EU students qualifying for assistance is lower than the percentage of UK full-time undergraduate students enrolled in England and Wales in academic year 2001/02 who are receiving full or partial support with their tuition fees, as Table B shows.

Table A

Percentage

Domicile	*Enrolments*	*Full assistance*	*Partial assistance*
Greece	9,304	47	11
France	6,739	22	7
Germany	6,932	15	6
Irish Republic	3,998	36	7
Spain	4,253	27	4
Italy	2,597	32	7
Sweden	2,276	46	11
Finland	1,382	32	11
Belgium	1,291	7	3
Netherlands	1,041	17	6
Portugal	1,103	50	7
Denmark	863	39	8
Austria	697	17	7
Luxembourg	456	3	2
Gibraltar	490	10	4
Total	43,422	32	8

Table B

Percentage

	Full assistance	*Partial assistance*
UK students	43	16
EU Students	32	8

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he will answer the Questions tabled by the hon. Member for Torbay on 3 March for answer on 5 March, reference 159415 and 159416. [165493]

Margaret Hodge: A reply has been issued today.

School Building

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of whether, in the Building Schools for the Future programme, adequate changing facilities are incorporated in school designs to allow all children to engage in sport on a daily basis to ensure that the Government can at least meet its targets on school sport and physical activity. [164837]

Mr. Miliband: The Building Schools for the Future programme aims to rebuild or refurbish all secondary schools to a high standard that will include sports facilities for both pupils and, outside schools hours, the local community to use. Changing and shower facilities remain a requirement of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 for pupils who have attained the age of 11 years, and non-statutory guidance on the area and design of these spaces is included in the 'Area Guidelines for Schools': both current (building Bulletin 82) and revised (from April 2004, Building Bulletin 98: Briefing Guide for Secondary School Projects).

School Finance

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the schools in

Carshalton and Wallington which ran a budget deficit in the year ending 31 March 2003; and how much this deficit was for each school. [163689]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is submitted to the Department according to local education authority areas rather than districts within an area. Carshalton and Wallington is a district of Sutton local education authority. The information for Sutton LEA is as follows:

Schools which ran a deficit budget in the year ending 31 March 2003

£

School name	*Deficit budget*
Rushy Meadow Primary School	(57,769)
Devonshire Primary School	(54,017)

Notes:

1. The data are as reported by Sutton LEA as at 26 March 2004 and taken from their 2002–03 Section 52 Outturn Statement submitted to the DfES.
2. Section 52 is collected at local education authority level not constituency level and there were two schools in Sutton LEA with a deficit budget in 2002–03. Of these, Rushy Meadow Primary School is in Carshalton.
3. Deficit budget is taken from Table B column 13-other revenue balance. This includes the cumulative balance of income less expenditure from revenue funding sources during the financial year and the balance from previous years.
4. Figures are rounded to the nearest pound.

School Repairs (Stroud)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) which schools in the Stroud constituency had at least one year when school repair capital spending was greater than £5,000 since 1997; [164169]

(2) what the total capital spending on school repairs for the Stroud constituency was for each year since 1997. [164170]

Mr. Miliband: The Department allocates capital funding to local education authorities (LEAs) and their schools. The majority of this capital support is allocated to schools and LEAs by formula, and they decide how to invest it in line with their asset management plans. The Department does not, therefore, have detailed information about all the capital investment in each school; this should be held locally.

The following table sets out the total capital support made by this Government to Gloucestershire LEA since 1996–97. This table includes devolved formula capital grants to schools and capital support for the voluntary aided sector.

	£ million
Gloucestershire LEA capital allocations	
1996–97	12.229
1997–98	7.947
1998–99	6.269
1999–2000	12.356
2000–01	24.862
2001–02	21.065
2002–03	22.917
2003–04	28.486

We have also already allocated indicative funding for future years worth approximately £34.6 million in 2004–05 and £20.1 million in 2005–06.

Websites

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total annual cost of his Department's websites, including those of its agencies, was in the most recent year for which figures are available. [159515]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information is as follows:

DfES—2003–04:

2003–04	£
Central website[1]	1,900,000
Customer facing portals[2]	978,000
Curriculum online[3]	2,394,598

[1] www.dfes.gov.uk
[2] 6 sites
[3] www.curriculumonline.gov.uk

Agencies—latest figures available:

Agency	*Total spent (£)*
Investors in People UK	160,000
QCA	380,000
CITB	315,000
ECITB	22,000
Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA)	112,585
Adult Learning Inspectorate	38,489
TTA	517,000
BECTA	1,267,100
NGfL	1,111,500
NCSL	673,000
HEFCE	67,000

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

CAP

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it her policy to commence negotiations to withdraw the UK from the Common Agricultural Policy. [163531]

Alun Michael: No. The Common Agricultural Policy is an integral part of the European Union's internal market. It would be bizarre to consider withdrawal at the point when we are achieving the reforms for which the UK has long argued. The changes will deliver a more rational CAP and we played a leading role in securing radical reforms last June. The reforms reflect our own goals for sustainable farming and will deliver better value for money to taxpayers and consumers, provide opportunities to boost farm incomes, bring benefits to the wider rural community, reduce damage to the environment and improve animal welfare.

As a result the reforms will bring benefits across the EU and to agricultural trade and development worldwide. The UK played a leading role in securing these reforms and we will continue to work within the EU for a more sustainable CAP.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what help will be given to Exmoor farmers as a result of the mid-term Common Agricultural Policy reform. [161884]

Alun Michael: Exmoor farmers, like all others, will benefit from decoupling of subsidies from production.

Some representations have been made to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State that the division of England into two regions; severely Disadvantaged Areas and land outside the SDA, might disadvantage some who farm within the SDA. As a result she has expressed her willingness to consider a small modification to the scheme to create a further region of moorland within the SDA if a case can be made that commands a broad consensus.

British Cattle Movement Service

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what role the British Cattle Movement Service plays in the tracing of stolen cattle. [164596]

Alun Michael: The British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) acts as the Department's main contact with keepers and police forces in tracing stolen cattle.

The BCMS provides evidence from the Cattle Tracing Scheme database to help the police establish the true ownership of animals in disputed cases.

The BCMS also acts for keepers directly by marking animals reported to have been stolen and informing the local police force when any further notifications are made to them about these animals.

The BCMS works closely with agricultural departments' inspectors, the police and local trading standards officers to ensure that the theft, movement and disposal of stolen animals is made as difficult as possible.

Department-sponsored Bodies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* resource budget, *(b)* administration costs and *(c)* staff numbers were for 2003 of the (i) Agricultural Wages Committees for England, (ii) Home Grown Cereals Authority, (iii) Horticultural Development Council, (iv) Horticultural Research International, (v) Milk Development Council, (vi) United Kingdom Register of Organic Food Standards, (vii) Wine Standards Board, (viii) Committee of Investigation for Great Britain, (ix) Committee on Agricultural Valuation, (x) Committee on Products and Processes for Use in Public Water Supply, (xi) Consumers' Committee for Great Britain under the Agriculture Marketing Act 1958, (xii) Hill Farming Advisory Committee for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, (xiii) Pesticide Residues Committee, (xiv) Water Regulations Advisory Committee, (xv) Zoos Forum, (xvi) Veterinary Laboratories Agency and (xvii) Veterinary Medicines Directorate. [165125]

Alun Michael: This information could not be provided without incurring disproportionate costs.

Departmental Costs

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what has been the total wage bill for her Department for each year since its inception; and what the projected figures for *(a)* total wages and *(b)* total staff numbers are for 2004–05. [164082]

Alun Michael: The expenditure and projected expenditure for DEFRA and its agencies is as follows:

	£000
2001–02	333,414
2002–03	380,358
2003–04	393,544
2004–05	387,291

The forecast staff numbers for 2004–05 is 13,106.

Illegal Hare Coursing

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment her Department has made of the effect on the rural economy of illegal hare coursing; [163803]

(2) what plans she has to bring forward legislation to reduce illegal hare coursing. [163805]

Alun Michael: Hare coursing as such is not illegal at present. 'Illegal hare coursing' takes place when other offences are associated with the activity, the most common offence being that of trespass. Since it is not a defined activity, separate studies of the economic effect of 'illegal hare coursing' would not be appropriate. Nor is further legislation focused on 'illegal hare coursing' likely to reduce its scale. Enforcement requires effective police intelligence and the active support of people living in affected areas to obtain evidence of offences being committed. However, the Government considers all forms of hare coursing to be undesirable because it involves unnecessary suffering. Last session's Hunting Bill would therefore have made all hare coursing events illegal. Evidence of this offence would be easier to obtain and this would help enforcement.

Land Mapping

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs further to correspondence with the hon. Member for the Vale of York, whether all the mistakes made during the digitalisation of the mapping of land have now been corrected. [164595]

Alun Michael: The maps referred to in the correspondence have been edited and are awaiting agreement from the hon. Member's constituent.

Noble House

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what type of energy generation is used for the supply of electricity and heating to Noble House; and whether her Department has experienced problems with this method of energy generation. [164594]

Alun Michael: The electricity supply for Nobel House is taken from the National Grid. Defra's contract is for the supply of electricity from 100 per cent. renewable sources.

Power for heating the building is delivered by standard mains gas.

Within the last 12 months, apart from some fluctuations in pressure for gas, and one brief failure in the supply for electricity due to external road works, no problems have been reported.

Rural Payments Agency

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under what Act the Rural Payment Agency is able to *(a)* demand money back from farmers and *(b)* deduct money from future payments after resolution of disputes over the slaughter premium scheme. [164599]

Alun Michael: A member state is obliged to recover any monies paid if an undue payment is made.

The basis upon which undue payments are recovered for Integrated Administration and Control System schemes, of which the Slaughter Premium Scheme is one, is Article 49 of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2419/2001 laying down the detailed rules for applying the integrated administration and control system for certain Community aid schemes established by Council Regulation (EEC) No 3508/92.

The point raised at *(a)* is covered under paragraph 1 of this article;

> "If undue payment is made, the farmer shall repay the amount in question plus interest calculated in accordance with the time the undue payment was made and the repayment date and in accordance with the provisions of the national law."

The point raised at *(b)* is covered by Article 38 of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2419/2001;

> "If the percentage established in accordance with paragraph 3 is more than 50% the farmer shall, moreover, be excluded once again from receiving aid up to an amount equal to that to be refused under the first subparagraph. This amount shall be offset against aid payments under the bovine aid schemes to which the farmer is entitled in the context of application he lodges in the course of the three calendar years following the calendar year of the finding."

Science Strategy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how her Department's Chief Scientific Adviser has ensured that the Department's scientific activities are well directed, as recommended in paragraph 7.11 of the Government's science strategy, Investing in Innovation, published in July 2002. [162484]

Alun Michael: Professor Howard Dalton FRS was appointed as Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser in March 2002. He is a full member of the Departmental Management Board. The Chief Scientific Adviser is responsible to Defra's Management Board and Ministers for the preparation of the Department's Science and Innovation Strategy. This sets out the vision for Defra science, and identifies the science needed to underpin and inform Defra policies across the three areas of environment, food and rural affairs. Defra's first Science and Innovation Strategy was published in May 2003.

CABINET OFFICE

Fisheries

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report entitled, Net Benefits: a sustainable and profitable future for UK fishing cost to produce. [165070]

Mr. Alexander: The Strategy Unit's total budget for this financial year is £4.7 million, which funds a range of projects and other work.

A total of 12 people worked on the project, and six of these were engaged on a full time basis.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BACS

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress his Department has made to manage the changeover from the Bank Automated Clearing System to the new BACSTEL-IP system for electronic payments. [164312]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has carried out some preliminary research with suppliers and will initiate a project in June to migrate our systems to BACSTEL-IP. It is anticipated that this project will be completed before the end of this year.

The requirement to comply with BACSTEL-IP has also been incorporated into the specifications for new systems.

Central America

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's aid policies for *(a)* Belize and *(b)* Central America. [164031]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The information requested is as follows.

(a) In Belize our focus is on supporting the Government of Belize to meet the benchmarks for qualifying for debt relief under the Commonwealth Debt Initiative. We granted debt relief of £1.548 million for the year July 2002 to 30 June 2003 and reached agreement in principle to the granting of additional debt relief for a further two years from July 2003 to June 2005. Further debt relief is subject to progress on agreed benchmarks in line with the three Commonwealth Debt Initiative criteria of sound economic management, pro-poor policies and accountable and transparent governance. These are the key areas in which we operate a £600,000 strategic fund over the three year period from June 2003 to June 2006.

The UK supports the OAS-sponsored Confidence Building Measures in Belize and Guatemala through the FCO/DFID/MOD Global Conflict Prevention Pool. £1.5 million has been allocated for financial year

2004–05. Our projects are aimed at reducing tensions, encouraging co-operation between security agencies, Government Ministries and Non Governmental Organisations, and addressing the underlying causes of conflict.

In addition Belize benefits from DFID's regional programme for the wider Caribbean which focuses on trade, security sector reform, HIV/AIDS, public sector reform and economic and fiscal management.

(b) We are reviewing our aid policy in relation to Central America. In 2004–05 DFID's Central American programme will be about £5 million of which £3 million will be to support our programme in Nicaragua. The DFID office in Honduras closes in 12 months time and we will withdraw from specific in-country activities in support of the Honduran Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Our policy in Central America is to work with other bilateral donors in order to enhance the impact on poverty of major multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Current priorities include enabling poor people to shape, participate in and benefit from access to markets and regional trade, and from more accountable and responsive public sector management, and political systems. In addition we engage regionally on issues of global concern—HIV/AIDS prevention and security. We have a larger programme in Nicaragua, where we are actively involved in the Poverty Reduction Strategy process.

Congo

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support his Department is providing to the Congo Basin Forest Partnership; and whether his Department has participated in discussions about the partnership's objectives. [164588]

Hilary Benn: DFID welcomed the Congo Basin Forest Partnership when it was launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development by the governments of the United States and South Africa. DFID staff have since participated in meetings of the Partnership in Africa. The UK contributes to the aims of the Partnership through DFID's work in Cameroon and our work in the region on forest law enforcement and governance.

EU Development Assistance

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the commitment of EU development assistance to *(a)* Baltic, *(b)* cross-border and *(c)* regional co-operation in 2002. [163859]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: EU assistance to the Baltic States is largely provided through the PHARE programme (PHARE stands for Poland and Hungary Assistance with Reconstruction, although the programme expanded to cover other countries). The objective of PHARE is to help candidate countries' preparations to accede to the European Union. This consists of technical assistance with the implementation of European legislation, and the building of institutional capacity. The Baltic States are also eligible for assistance under the ISPA programme (Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession: to help candidate countries to meet environmental standards) and the SAPARD programme (Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development: to help candidate countries deal with the problems of the structural adjustment in their agricultural sectors and rural areas, as well as in the implementation of legislation concerning the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) and related issues). The total planned allocation to the Baltic States under these three programmes was approximately €323 million in 2002.

In addition the Tacis programme (development assistance to the nations of Eastern Europe and Central Asia) contains an element for co-operation in the Baltic region. In 2002 this focused on the promotion of environmental protection and management of natural resources and support for the private sector and assistance for economic development. The total planned allocation for this in 2002 was approximately €8 million. Cross-border assistance also forms a part of the Tacis programme. It aims to assist border regions in overcoming specific developmental problems, encourage links between economic, social and transport networks, accelerate social and economic reform in the partner states and to reduce transboundary environmental risks and pollution. The total planned allocation for cross-border activities in Tacis in 2002 was approximately €27.5. The PHARE programme also contains provision for cross-border activities, the objective of which is to promote cooperation of border regions in countries in central and eastern Europe with adjacent regions in a neighbouring country. The total planned allocation for cross-border activities in PHARE in 2002 was approximately €151 million.

The PHARE and Tacis programmes, as well as the CARDS programme for assistance to the countries of the Western Balkans, contain the facility for spending to promote regional co-operation where that supports delivery of the overall objectives of the programme. It is not possible to produce an estimate for the total spending on regional co-operation in 2002 because this aspect is not individually accounted for in comparable ways across all of the programmes.

Fairtrade

Claire Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action his Department is taking to promote the use of Fairtrade goods in the UK. [164089]

Hilary Benn: DFID works with the Fairtrade Foundation to promote the use of Fairtrade goods in the UK.

Through the Development Awareness Fund, we have provided 120,000 to the media campaigns of the Fairtrade Foundation. These are designed specifically to raise both supermarket and consumer awareness of products carrying the Fairtrade Mark. In 2002, DFID provided £300,000 to the Foundation to help extend the range of Fairtrade products on UK supermarket shelves over the next two years. We also gave a grant to support the Fairtrade town/city brand in the UK over three years. This year, I took part in the launch of Fairtrade Fortnight and participated in a number of other events.

DFID will continue to support Fairtrade initiatives that raise awareness of the impact our buying decisions can have on poverty.

Opinion Sampling

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his estimate is of total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* focus groups and *(b)* opinion polls in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [162747]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In 1998, DFID commissioned Opinion Leader Research (OLR) to undertake baseline focus group research among the UK public. In 2003, we commissioned OLR to undertake further focus group research to explore ways of increasing understanding and support for international development in the UK. DFID also commissions two annual opinion polls on public attitudes to development. One poll, undertaken by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), monitors the opinion of the UK adult population, and the second, undertaken by Market and Opinion Research International (MORI), monitors the opinion of schoolchildren. In 1999, we also undertook a readership survey of "Developments" magazine, in order to test its impact and reach. The results of the focus group research and the opinion polls are used to inform, and monitor the impact of, our work on development awareness and education.

The Department for International Development was established in 1997. Information on focus group research and opinion polling undertaken in 1995–96 by the Overseas Development Administration is not held centrally, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Contracts for focus group and opinion poll research are let in accordance with agreed tendering procedures to ensure value for money. The annual cost of focus group research and opinion polls is detailed in the following table:

	Focus groups	*Cost (£)*	*Opinion polls*	*Cost (£)*	*Total (£)*
1997–98	OLR Baseline Study	43,000	—	—	43,000
1998–99	—		—	—	—
1999–2000	—		ONS Poll	28,200	44,704
			MORI Poll	14,700	
			Developments Survey	1,804	
2000–01	—		ONS Poll	33,000	47,629
			MORI Poll	14,629	
2001–02	—		ONS Poll	34,300	45,815
			MORI Poll	11,515	
2002–03	—		ONS Poll	31,880	43,395
			MORI Poll	11,515	
2003–04	OLR Research	50,309	ONS Poll	32,990	95,519
			MORI Poll	12,220	

Register of Interests

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the requirements are on officials in his Department to declare current interests; and what register of interests is kept for his departmental officials. [164702]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID follows Cabinet Office guidance on the disclosure of interests that is set out in Section 4.3 of the Civil Service Management Code. The letters of appointment for staff draw their attention to the rules on use of official information and related activities that are set out in full in our Staff Handbook. The Handbook states that employees must obtain permission from the Head of Human Resources (a Senior Civil Servant) before entering into any business or financial dealings with individuals or businesses with whom they come into official contact, either directly or indirectly. They must also declare immediately if, in the course of their work, they come into contact with an outside organisation in which they have an interest. We do not hold an official register of interests. There is no requirement to do so.

Water Supplies (Africa)

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance is being made available by *(a)* the United Kingdom under bilateral arrangements, *(b)* the European Union, *(c)* the United States of America and *(d)* aid agencies to develop clean water supplies in sub-Saharan Africa; and if he will make a statement. [164303]

Hilary Benn: The UK is working with the EU Water Initiative finance working group to improve the tracking of aid flows in the water sector. This is because different donors currently use different criteria to calculate support to the water sector or track support within multi sector projects. Figures may also include or exclude related issues such as water resources management or concessional loans. Data on water expenditure are not, therefore, directly comparable. The most recent available data for support to the water sector in sub-Sahara Africa 2001–02 show expenditure as:

UK = £29million (NAO 2003 report, excludes programme aid)

USAID = $12.4 million (based on OECD figures)

European Commission = Euro 210.7 million (based on OECD figures)

European Member States total = $ 1.2 billion

The UK figure does not include our contributions to the European Commission development funds or other multilateral organisations. UK figures include only direct expenditure on the water sector and not multi-sector projects. EC and US figures include broader resource management projects and concessional loans.

DFID's approach to these issues is set out in the Water Action Plan which I presented to the House on 5 April 2004.

Wildlife Management

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) if he will assist the governments of *(a)* Ghana and *(b)* Cameroon in implementing the indicative actions of the African Forest Law Enforcement and Governance ministerial declaration with respect to (i) wildlife and (ii) bushmeat; [164669]

(2) what new funding has been released to improve wildlife management since the publication of the Department's Wildlife and Poverty Study; [164670]

(3) what resources have been allocated to ensure that wildlife and bushmeat issues are incorporated into poverty assessments since the publication of the Department's Wildlife and Poverty Study. [164671]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development (DFID) is committed to working with the governments of Ghana and Cameroon to strengthen their capacity to deal with wildlife and poverty issues. We do this by supporting sector reform. It is for the governments concerned to prioritise actions within their sector reform programmes. Whether or not these governments choose to prioritise the "indicative actions" included in the Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (AFLEG) Declaration, DFID's support will be to the programme as a whole and not to any particular elements of it.

The DFID Wildlife and Poverty Study estimated that 150 million very poor people are significantly dependent on wildlife for their food and livelihoods, and that bushmeat is one important part of this. The study drew out implications for donors, governments, the private sector and civil society, but did not make any explicit recommendations to DFID. No new funding has been released specifically to improve wildlife management since its publication. We have however disseminated the findings of the study widely.

DFID has a two-pronged strategy for ensuring that biodiversity is integrated into development policy and practice by:

supporting partner governments to identify links between biodiversity and poverty and integrate environmental matters, including biodiversity, into their national policy frameworks for poverty reduction (DFID includes biodiversity in its screening processes for bilateral programmes).

promoting the adoption of strategic environmental assessments in the multilateral agencies DFID supports, the EC, the UN, the development banks and others.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

District Judges

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General how many district judges (crime) it is intended will be in post in Teesside in 2004. [164445]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

There will be two additional district judges (magistrates courts) in post in Teesside in 2004, from May this year making three in total.

Electronic Tagging

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what the Crown Prosecution Service's policy is on prosecuting for criminal damage people on home detection curfew who remove or break their electronic tag. [164444]

The Solicitor-General: An offender who intentionally damages their electronic tag in order to secure its removal or intentionally damages the monitoring equipment will be in breach of the licence conditions for early release from prison. The electronic monitoring contractor will submit a report to the Early Release and Recall Unit of HM Prison Service, which may result in the licence being revoked and the offender recalled to prison.

It is for the electronic monitoring contractors to consider reporting to the police for investigation any allegation of criminal damage caused to the tag or the monitoring equipment. Any subsequent decision to pursue a prosecution for criminal damage will be taken by the Crown Prosecution Service in accordance with guidance in the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Advertising and Obesity

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of links between television advertising and obesity in children. [165031]

Estelle Morris: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has made no separate assessment of links between TV advertising and obesity in children but the Department continues to participate in the consultations being undertaken by the Food Standards Agency on the possible impact of broadcast advertising on childhood obesity.

The Secretary of State has also asked Ofcom to examine the adequacy of its codes regulating the content of broadcast advertising of food to children and Ofcom has indicated that it will make its own assessment of the evidence.

The impact of food promotion must be considered in the context of the wide range of factors which may have an influence on the increase in childhood obesity, which the Government are addressing through a number of cross-departmental initiatives.

Community Fund

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of Community Fund grants have been distributed to wards in the 20 per cent.most deprived wards in the country according to the 2000 indices of deprivation. [164629]

Estelle Morris: The specific information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost. However, the joint Community Fund/New Opportunities Fund Fair

Share initiative aims to make Lottery funding more readily available to disadvantaged communities in 77 local areas, which so far have not received their fair share of Lottery funding. The 77 Fair Share areas were selected on the basis of deprivation and low levels of Lottery funding. In England, the levels of deprivation were determined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000.

Funding (Redbridge)

Linda Perham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was spent from central government funds per capita on cultural and sporting activities in the London Borough of Redbridge since 1997. [164880]

Mr. Caborn: Central government funds have been spent on cultural and sporting activities in the London Borough of Redbridge since 1997 as follows:

The London Borough of Redbridge received funds directly from DCMS in 2000–01 through the DCMS/ Wolfson Fund. The Borough was part of a consortium of ten local authorities that received a total of £160,000 for Reader Development projects. It is not possible to determine what proportion of this money was allocated to Redbridge.

The London Borough of Redbridge has received the following funds from the Department's directly-funded non-departmental public bodies since 1997.

Arts Council England

Financial year	*Grant (£)*	*Details*
1997–98	8,000	To support year 2 (of 3) Partnership funding to implement an arts education development programme
1998–99	8,000	To support year 3 (of 3) Partnership funding to implement an arts education development programme
2000–01	1,000	Towards the cost of dance company residencies in schools as part of the Redbridge Dance Festival 2001
2003–04	10,000	Towards the costs of outreach and education activities linked to Redbridge Dance Festival 2004, and research and planning to support
Total	27,000	

English Heritage

Financial year	*Grant (£)*	*Details*
1997–98	70,000	Since 1997, English Heritage has offered 10,000 p.a. towards the cost of employing a Conservation Officer at Redbridge Council
1999–2000	6,848	Chapel at Wanstead Hospital
2000–01	25,000	Repairs to the Portico at Valentines Mansion
2003–04	3,000	Repairs to "Temple", The Avenue, Wanstead
	71,000	Contribution of £12,000 to costs of Stage 1 preparatory works towards major repairs to the Chapel of St. Mary and St Thomas, Ilford, with agreement to a further £59,000 towards repairs following successful completion of Stage 1.
Total	175,848	

The total funding from both Arts Council England and English Heritage since 1997 is £202,848. Based on a resident population of 238,635 as measured in the 2001 Census, this equates to £0.85 per person.

Expenditure on cultural services in Redbridge is also supported by the Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services (EPCS) block of the formula grant. The amount of money that a local authority spends on cultural services is a matter for each individual authority.

Licensees

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what funding will be offered by her Department to help licensees meet the terms of the Licensing Act 2003; and if she will make a statement. [165077]

Mr. Caborn: We have made it repeatedly clear that the licensing regime to be established under the Licensing Act 2003 should permit the full recovery of the licensing authorities' costs of administration, inspection and enforcement under that regime. We do not consider that taxpayers should subsidise applicants for authorisations under the 2003 Act, save in two instances. During the passage of the Licensing Bill, we gave undertakings in both Houses that schools, sixth form colleges and village, parish or other community halls would be exempted from fees associated with the provision of regulated entertainment. The licensing authorities' costs in these cases will be met by central Government. When compared with the continued operation of the existing licence regimes, we estimate that industry will save £1.97 billion over the first 10 years of the operation of the new regime.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance her Department *(a)* has issued and *(b)* plans to issue to licensees regarding the Licensing Act 2003; and if she will make a statement. [165109]

Mr. Caborn: The Guidance laid in Parliament on 23 March under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 is guidance to licensing authorities on the discharge of their functions under the 2003 Act, but we hope that it will also be beneficial and helpful to future applicants for authorisations under that Act.

More generally extensive guidance about the Licensing Act 2003 can be found on the DCMS website (www.culture.gsi.gov.uk). In addition, we continue to work closely with local government representatives, representatives of performers, trade associations and other stakeholders on the dissemination of information that will assist potential licensees in understanding their duties and responsibilities under the new Act.

National Lottery

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much National Lottery funding has been allocated to sporting projects in Cornwall in the past five years, broken down by lottery distributor. [165720]

Estelle Morris: The information shown in the table is broken down by calendar year. It is derived from information supplied to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport by the Lottery distribution bodies, although the Lottery funding totalled in the table came exclusively from Sport England.

	£
1999–2000	67,966
2000–01	142,000
2001–02	192,096
2002–03	104,104
2003–04	12,018

The New Opportunities Fund, the Community Fund and the Awards for All programme also channel funding into projects that may involve an element of sport, however it is not possible to identify this precisely.

OFCOM Consultations

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the consultations launched by Ofcom since October 2003, broken down by *(a)* estimated cost, *(b)* length of consultations and *(c)* number of responses; and if she will make a statement. [165009]

Estelle Morris: The matter raised the responsibility of OFCOM as independent regulator. Accordingly, my officials have asked the Chief Executive of Ofcom to respond directly to the hon. Member. Copies of the Chief Executive's letter will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Physical Activity

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate her Department has made of progress towards achieving the physical activity target established in Game Plan; and if she will make a statement. [165005]

Mr. Caborn: The first national survey to measure physical activity levels in the population since the publication of Game Plan was the 2003 Health Survey for England, which is likely to report in December 2004.

In the absence of these data it is difficult to estimate progress against the target established in Game Plan, other than that which can be inferred from ongoing strategies to increase participation in sport and physical activity.

We will include initial proposals for monitoring and evaluation of measures to increase physical activity in a forthcoming ACT discussion document to be published shortly.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what research her Department has commissioned on physical activity, broken down by the *(a)* cost, *(b)* recipient of the contract and *(c)* number of copies of the research published; whether it was published online; and if she will make a statement. [165006]

Mr. Caborn: Sport England, a non departmental public body of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, is working with other Government Departments and Agencies including the Department of Health and the Health Development Agency to undertake research in this area.

This will contribute to the work of the Activity Co-ordination Team (ACT) created in response to the joint Department for Culture, Media and Sport/Strategy Unit Report Game Plan. ACT has reviewed existing Government research and will include a draft research strategy in a forthcoming ACT discussion document to be published shortly.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received from *(a)* Sport England, *(b)* the regional sports boards, *(c)* the Department for Health, *(d)* the Treasury, *(e)* the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and *(f)* other Government bodies on the physical activity target set in the Game Plan; and if she will make a statement. [165007]

Mr. Caborn: The Activity Co-ordination Team is considering the feasibility of the Game Plan target and how a partnership between Government, the wider public sector, private and voluntary sectors can work together to meet it. Derek Wanless recommended that the Government's physical activity targets be reviewed. ACT will shortly be publishing a discussion document on delivering increased physical activity, including appropriate targets.

Register of Interests

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the requirements are on officials in her Department to declare current interests; and what register of interests is kept for her departmental officials. [164700]

Mr. Caborn: The Civil Service Management Code sets out the requirement for civil servants declaring any conflict of interest. This is brought to the attention of staff in the Department through the Staff Guide. It also identifies areas where a conflict of interest between private and departmental interests could potentially occur, and explains the procedure for the raising of and, where appropriate, the recording of any such conflict with senior management.

Subtitling

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on how her Department is responding to Ofcom's recommendations for subtitle provision, with particular reference to live events. [165135]

Estelle Morris: The Government are committed to extending access to broadcasting services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing—hence the new statutory requirements in the Communications Act 2003. The Act requires Ofcom to draw up a code on

subtitling provision and gives them the ability to exclude programmes and services from the subtitling requirements after considering a number of criteria including the extent of the benefit for disabled people and technical difficulty.

Ofcom consulted on a draft code and I understand that, in light of representations received, Ofcom do not now propose to exempt live programming from the subtitling requirements. Indeed Ofcom have concluded that it is important that live programming should be included in the requirement and we welcome that conclusion.

Ticket Touting

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions her Department has had with *(a)* concert venues, *(b)* tour promoters, *(c)* artists, *(d)* music fans and *(e)* others regarding ticket touting; and if she will make a statement. [164482]

Estelle Morris: I have had no formal discussions with these groups on this issue.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance her Department has issued to internet auction sites regarding ticket touts; and if she will make a statement. [164483]

Estelle Morris: I have issued no guidance to internet auction sites regarding ticket touts.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what research her Department has commissioned into the impact of ticket touting *(a)* in person, *(b)* through published advertisements, *(c)* via internet auction sites and *(d)* through other means on the live music industry in the United Kingdom; and if she will make a statement. [164484]

Estelle Morris: None.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what instructions her Department has issued to the Live Music Forum regarding the impact of ticket touting on live music; and if she will make a statement. [164485]

Estelle Morris: None. The Forum's aims are to: maximise the take-up of reforms in the Licensing Act 2003 relating to the performance of live music; promote the performance of live music generally; monitor and evaluate the impact of the 2003 Act on the performance of live music; and make recommendations for further action. It will be up to the Forum to decide how best to achieve these aims.

PRIME MINISTER

Counter-terrorism (EU)

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister further to his oral statement on the outcome of the European Council of 29 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1259, if he will list the names of the candidates from which the new EC counter-terrorism co-ordinator was chosen; what the reasons were for the choice; and whether the co-ordinator will have the authority to review the security of nuclear materials in transport as part of his responsibilities. [165578]

The Prime Minister: The counter-terrorism co-ordinator is personally appointed by and responsible to the Secretary-General of the European Council, Javier Solana.

The co-ordinator will be responsible for co-ordinating the counter-terrorism work of the Council. The security of nuclear materials in transport remains a national responsibility for member states.

Human Rights (China)

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister whether he raised human rights issues with Jiang Zemin at his meeting with him in 1999. [165589]

The Prime Minister: I discussed a wide range of issues with President Jiang Zemin during his state visit to the UK in 1999 including bilateral relations, economic co-operation and human rights issues.

Libya

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his oral statement on Libya of 29 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1267, on which date Libya first volunteered information on the extent of their chemical and nuclear weapons programmes; to which countries the highly sensitive documentation and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) related equipment were removed; by whom and how it was decided to where this equipment should be removed; and if he will place in the Library written declarations Libya has made in respect of its WMD programme. [165572]

The Prime Minister: On 19 December, Libya declared its intention to dismantle completely and verifiably its weapons of mass destruction programmes and to limit the range of its missiles.

The UK and US assisted Libya by removing all declared nuclear weapons related material to secure locations in the US. This was done with the full knowledge, agreement and cooperation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

No chemical weapons material related has been removed from Libya. Under the supervision of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), all Libya's declared chemical weapons munitions have been destroyed. We are currently in discussions with the Libyan authorities concerning the destruction of their chemical agents.

Within their respective remits, the responsibility for verifying Libya's written declarations lies with the IAEA and the OPCW. The Libyan authorities have fully informed these organisations about the details of their weapons programmes. Copies of the IAEA's and OPCW's initial reports on Libya's nuclear and chemical weapons programmes have been placed in the Library of the House.

The UN has welcomed this move by Libya as a positive step towards the strengthening of global efforts to prevent the spread and use of weapons of mass destruction.

Lockerbie

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what response he has given to the letter from Mrs. Pamela Dix, Secretary of UK Families Flight 103, requesting a meeting on his discussions with the Libyan leaderships about Lockerbie. [165367]

The Prime Minister: I will be happy to meet the representatives of the Lockerbie families, as soon as a mutually convenient time can be found. I will brief the families about my talks with Colonel Qadhafi and discuss the issues with them

Majid Nawaz

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make representations to the President of Egypt that he grant a pardon to Majid Nawaz. [165227]

The Prime Minister: We will consider any further action in relation to Majid Nawaz when we have received a transcript of the judge's summation of the verdict.

Postwatch

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Prime Minister what representations he has received about line management in Postwatch. [165372]

The Prime Minister: As far am I am aware, none.

Provisional IRA

David Burnside: To ask the Prime Minister whether he discussed the supply of arms and explosives to the Provisional IRA with Colonel Gaddafi last week. [165219]

The Prime Minister: I discussed a wide range of issues with Colonel Gadaffi including international and regional security issues, including terrorism.

Rogue States

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 923W, on rogue states, whether he has determined that *(a)* Israel, *(b)* India and *(c)* Pakistan fall within the definition given of a rogue state. [165524]

The Prime Minister: We continue to have serious concerns about proliferation activities in all three states, and regularly raise these concerns with them.

SCOTLAND

Strip Stamps

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has held with the First Minister of Scotland with regard to the introduction of tax stamps on bottles of spirits. [164566]

Mr. Darling: I discuss a wide range of topical issues with the First Minister of Scotland.

TRANSPORT

Anonymous Tip-offs

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many cases raised through anonymous tip-offs in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003 were referred to the police for further investigation. [164479]

Mr. Jamieson: The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency has not had any cases of anonymous tip-offs in the South East that have resulted in a police investigation.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many successful cases were brought against transport companies in Sittingbourne and Sheppey as a result of anonymous tip-offs in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003. [164480]

Mr. Jamieson: Neither VOSA or The Office of the Traffic Commissioner in the South East holds a record of the number of successful cases that were brought against companies as the result of an anonymous tip-off.

Buses

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on modernisation of bus fleets under his bus strategy. [164839]

Dr. Howells: Continuation of the currently high levels of investment by the bus industry in new, modern accessible vehicles is an important part of encouraging bus use and improving local transport provision.

We agreed targets in 2002 with the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), which represents the vast majority of bus operators in the UK, for reducing the average age of the bus fleet and for increasing the accessibility of vehicles.

The CPT has committed its members in Great Britain to a target which aims to achieve and maintain an average fleet age of eight years for their vehicles which are mainly used for local bus services, during the period up to 2010. The latest available figure shows an average vehicle age of 7.5 years.

We are also tracking the proportion of full size bus fleet that is fully accessible, the aim being to ensure that 50 per cent. of vehicles are fully accessible by 2010. The latest available figure shows that 29.3 per cent. of the full size bus fleet currently meet these requirements.

Crossrail

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the viability of the proposal to extend Crossrail to Kingston via Richmond. [164492]

Mr. McNulty: The Crossrail proposals submitted by Cross-London Rail Links Ltd. (CLRL) include a branch to Kingston. The Review set up by my right hon. Friend under the chairmanship of Adrian Montague has necessarily considered this branch as part of its

assessment of the overall deliverability of the proposed team. My right hon. Friend is currently considering the Review Team's findings, which will be published in due course.

Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many motor vehicles equipped with cameras are used by or on behalf of the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency for the purpose of recording untaxed car use; what the total cost has been of such vehicles and equipment; and upon what basis decisions are made concerning their deployment. [165190]

Dr. Howells: DVLA has 15 automatic number plate reader (ANPR) vans—12 in the UK and three in Northern Ireland. These units have been in operation since October 2001. They are equipped with cameras used to detect unlicensed vehicles on the public road. The annual running cost is approximately £1.2 million.

These vehicles are deployed throughout the UK and Northern Ireland. They work closely with the police on joint operations to target areas of high VED evasion and are also involved in DVLA publicity campaigns. DVLA has a program of campaigns which cover all areas of the UK over an 18 month period.

In addition to DVLA's own vehicles police automatic number plate reader cameras are used to identify unlicensed vehicles. This initiative, named Project Laser, was launched in June 2003 and currently involves 23 police forces in the UK.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list, by county, the areas in which motor vehicles equipped with cameras used by or on behalf of the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency for recording untaxed car use have been deployed during the last 12 months. [165192]

Dr. Howells: DVLA's Automatic Number Plate Reader (ANPR) vehicles are deployed throughout the UK and Northern Ireland to target areas of high vehicle excise duty evasion. They work closely with the police on joint operations and are also involved in DVLA publicity campaigns. DVLA has a programme to cover all areas of the UK.

In addition to the DVLA's own vehicles police automatic number plate reader cameras are used to identify unlicensed vehicles. This initiative, named Project Laser, was launched in June 2003 and involves 23 police forces in the UK. This operation also covers large areas of the UK.

Electronic Vehicle Licensing System

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the original targets for the implementation of the Electronic Vehicle Licensing System were; and what the current forecast is; and if he will make a statement. [164617]

Mr. Jamieson: The original target for implementation of the Electronic Vehicle Relicensing system was February 2004. This target was achieved on 18 February when the first customers used the telephone and internet to purchase their vehicle licence. The service also gives customers the opportunity to make a Statutory Off Road Notification (known as SORN) using the electronic channels. This service is being introduced in a phased approach, customers will be notified when they are eligible to use the service through their Vehicle Licence Application form.

Eurostar (Near Collision)

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the near collision of two Eurostar trains on 23 March. [164430]

Dr. Howells: Network Rail are undertaking a full internal investigation into an incident involving two Eurostar trains which occurred on 22 March. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) will be reviewing Network Rail's report on the incident. The HSE advise that one train was stationary at a signal and the other was travelling at very low speed.

Heavy Goods/Public Service Vehicles

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many routine vehicle checks were carried out on *(a)* heavy goods vehicles and *(b)* public service vehicles on road freight transport operators' premises in each of the last 10 years. [163836]

Mr. Jamieson: The number of roadworthiness fleet checks carried out by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (formerly the Vehicle Inspectorate) on heavy goods vehicles and public service vehicles in each of the last 10 years is shown in the following table:

Roadworthiness fleet checks

Vehicle category	*HGV*	*PSV*
2002–03	26,487	4,499
2001–02	25,500	4,661
2000–01	39,260	5,197
1999–2000	39,048	5,298
1998–99	39,425	5,759
1997–98	45,170	6,439
1996–97	44,520	7,112
1995–96	48,749	6,800
1994–95	50,942	6,804
1993–94	57,869	8,123

Note:
The figures for HGV include checks carried out on trailers.

The reduction in the number of checks carried out in more recent years reflects a change of focus by VOSA on the way its activities are undertaken. Through better data analysis and more effective targeting, VOSA activities increasingly focus on the value of the activity in terms of improving road safety and environmental protection rather than the pure number of inspections.

Jubilee Line

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the British Transport Police were called to the incident involving a train radio fault on the Jubilee Line on 27 March. [165097]

Mr. McNulty: This is an operational matter for London Underground, who since last July have been part of Transport for London. I understand from London Underground that while British Transport

Police (BTP) were made aware of the technical fault with the Jubilee Line radio system on 27 March, there was no need for the BTP to attend.

Litterbugs

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many successful prosecutions were carried out against passengers for dropping litter on *(a)* trains and *(b)* buses last year. [165151]

Mr. McNulty: The British Transport Police have advised me that there were no successful prosecutions against passengers dropping litter on trains during 2003. Two people were successfully prosecuted for littering offences on railway stations. Information on prosecutions for dropping litter on buses is not collected centrally.

M6

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether funding was provided for the signage for the M6 toll motorway by the CAMBRA construction consortium. [164946]

Mr. Jamieson: Funding for the signage of the M6 Toll and its approaches was provided by Midland Expressway Ltd. Signing within local town centres indicating routes to the toll road was paid for by the relevant local authorities.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether funding was provided for the signage for the M6 toll motorway by *(a)* Midland Expressway Ltd., *(b)* his Department, *(c)* the Highways Agency and *(d)* a combination of public and private finance. [164673]

Mr. Jamieson: Funding for the signage of the M6 Toll and its approaches was provided by Midland Expressway Ltd. Signing within local town centres indicating routes to the toll road was paid for by the relevant local authorities.

My Travel

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what advice his Department has received from the Civil Aviation Authority on whether My Travel's ATOL bond is sufficient to meet customer claims in the event of that company's financial failure; [164643]

(2) what funds the Air Travel Trust Fund would be required to provide to cover the cost of air tickets in the event of the financial failure of My Travel. [164644]

Mr. McNulty: The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) provides advice to the Department on a range of issues connected with the operation of the ATOL scheme.

In the event of insolvency of any ATOL holder, the bond would be used to cover the costs of repatriation of customers abroad at the time of the failure and to reimburse those who have paid for their holiday or air ticket but yet to travel.

Due to the seasonal nature of the package travel industry, travel organiser liability varies throughout the year. The level of bond that ATOL holders establish with the CAA is based on their projected licensable turnover but if in the event of insolvency the bond proves to be insufficient, monies from the Air Travel Trust Fund would be used to make up the difference.

Office of the Traffic Commissioner

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will ask an external body to audit the work of the Office of the Traffic Commissioner in Eastbourne. [164481]

Mr. Jamieson: The Traffic Commissioner for the South East and Metropolitan Area based in Eastbourne is statutorily independent in his licensing functions and not subject to audit.

His administrative support is provided by staff of the Department for Transport whose work is periodically audited under arrangements agreed with the National Audit Office and there is no need to advance the standing programme.

Port Security

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department spent in the 2003–04 financial year on the training of port security officers. [165107]

Mr. Jamieson: My Department's Transport Security Directorate (TRANSEC) was responsible for developing the required training parameters for PFSOs and approving the training providers, TRANSEC absorbed the necessary staff costs associated with developing the regime. In addition TRANSEC is also absorbing the subsequent costs of conducting unannounced audits to ensure that the trainers are teaching the approved syllabus to the required standard.

However, industry is meeting the costs of putting individual PFSOs through the training courses. Courses generally run for three days (21 hours) and costs vary between the approved training providers; the range being £300 to £2,000 per candidate per course.

Approved training providers are listed on the Departmental website at: www.dft.gov.uk.

Powered Two-wheelers

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 18 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 405W, on powered two-wheelers, when he expects to be able to provide the figures requested. [164897]

Mr. Jamieson: Casualty statistics for Two Wheeled Motor Vehicle users in 2003 are due to be published as part of the "Road Casualties in Great Britain—Main Results" bulletin on 24 June 2004. A copy of the bulletin will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Rail Services (Kent)

Jonathan Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the change in the numbers of those using the *(a)* A2 and *(b)* M2 as a consequence of the Strategic Rail Authority's Integrated Kent Franchise proposals. [162504]

Mr. McNulty: The SRA has examined the shift from road to rail on an aggregate basis, not by individual roads, as part of the appraisal of the Integrated Kent Franchise. The impact of the Integrated Kent Franchise on road usage will depend on the pattern of services chosen following the consultation exercise currently in progress.

Regional Assemblies

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* responsibility for local transport plans and *(b)* functions of the Highways Agency could be transferred to regional assemblies. [164548]

Mr. McNulty: The transport powers of elected regional assemblies were set out in the White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions" (Cm5511).

Elected regional assemblies will be responsible for advising government on funding allocations for local transport, taking over functions currently exercised by regional government offices. There are no plans to transfer the functions of the Highways Agency to regional assemblies.

Register of Interests

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the requirements are on officials in his Department to declare current interests; and what register of interests is kept for his departmental officials. [164712]

Mr. McNulty: The Department's staff are required to inform line managers and Human Resources of any conflict of interests. The Department does not keep a register for conflicts of interests.

Seatbelts

Jim Dowd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many applications for exemption from the requirement to wear a seat belt in the front seat of a car on the public highway have been *(a)* received and *(b)* granted in each of the past 10 years. [165236]

Mr. Jamieson: There is no requirement for vehicle users to apply for such exemptions. The Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1993 (SI 1993 No. 176), and The Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts by Children in Front Seats) Regulations 1993 (SI 1993 No. 31) provide exemptions for specific situations and/or occupational groups.

Doctors can also exempt a person from the requirement to use a seat belt on medical grounds. The Regulations are available on-line at: www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk.

South Hampshire Rapid Transit Project

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress with the South Hampshire Rapid Transit project, with particular reference to the expected starting date. [163900]

Mr. McNulty: This scheme remains under consideration following a significant increase in the proposed level of central Government funding. A decision will be made in due course.

Track Access Costs

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the track access costs for each train company for each year since 1997. [164823]

Mr. McNulty: The track access costs since 1997 are in the following table. These figures include both the fixed and variable track access charges and charges for the use of stations and depots.

Track access costs

£ million

TOC Name	*Sector*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Anglia Railways	LSE	10.40	43.85	44.20	44.64	44.75	25.38	26.28	27.74
Arriva Trains Merseyside	Regional	5.87	33.31	32.25	31.97	31.59	30.64	26.31	29.18
Arriva Trains Northern	Regional	12.64	164.54	165.73	166.66	164.16	157.50	142.37	115.80
Central Trains	Regional	10.55	126.66	127.83	125.27	122.69	97.11	98.78	110.00
Chiltern Railways	LSE	11.31	19.00	19.46	19.86	20.63	18.07	21.04	25.16
C2C	LSE	32.98	39.17	38.99	39.15	39.25	32.61	34.16	34.90
Connex South Eastern	LSE	75.16	159.88	159.94	158.70	156.28	162.42	161.69	183.01
East London Line	LSE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
First Great Eastern	LSE	17.64	74.11	74.36	74.04	72.93	73.52	71.64	73.57
First Great Western	Strategic	96.30	100.29	112.46	111.27	109.27	112.11	109.78	118.51
First North Western	Regional	9.61	117.17	120.89	120.70	118.86	117.49	117.72	107.80
Gatwick Express	LSE	10.18	11.85	11.10	11.27	10.97	14.05	14.20	14.90
Great North Eastern Railway	Strategic	175.61	147.90	148.47	150.35	148.48	93.54	96.93	103.80
Greater Anglia	LSE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Integrated Kent	LSE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Island Line	LSE	0.59	1.29	1.21	1.21	1.28	1.33	1.40	1.53
Midland Mainline	Strategic	32.29	35.21	34.74	35.06	34.94	28.28	31.06	35.90
Northern	Regional	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
South Central	LSE	108.59	129.04	132.12	130.12	130.78	106.07	108.99	121.50
Scotrail	Regional	0.00	177.68	184.85	183.46	181.22	145.69	157.64	176.92
Silverlink	LSE	4.47	55.17	56.29	55.18	54.34	73.42	79.76	84.84
South West Trains	LSE	159.35	162.52	161.85	165.56	163.97	139.75	145.13	170.48
Thames Trains	LSE	18.80	40.16	40.75	40.24	39.89	30.78	32.90	26.20
Thameslink	LSE	3.73	44.41	45.45	45.93	45.40	34.24	35.64	29.10
TransPennine Express	Strategic	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.60
Virgin West Coast	Strategic	9.80	153.03	149.36	148.26	133.30	279.30	195.76	309.92
Virgin Cross Country	Strategic	23.00	102.71	104.93	105.80	103.53	152.80	162.84	177.21
West Anglia Great Northern	LSE	0.00	94.26	93.67	93.78	93.54	79.58	81.99	86.80
Wales and Borders Trains	Regional	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.05	44.42	64.33
Wessex Trains	Regional	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.82	25.37	29.20

Traffic Calming

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of claims against local authorities in each of the last five years related to incidents involving *(a)* speed humps and *(b)* other methods of traffic calming; and if he will make a statement. [165057]

Mr. McNulty: Information about claims against local authorities is not held by the Department for Transport.

Transport for London

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the capital allocation to Transport for London for *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05 was, broken down by (i) bus and (ii) Underground. [164832]

Dr. Howells: My Department provides block funding to Transport for London through the GLA Transport Grant, and it is for the Mayor to determine how much of this grant should be allocated for capital investment in buses or London Underground. The GLA Transport Grant was £1,681.932 million in 2003–04, and will be £2,224.556 million in 2004–05.

Urban Light Rail

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of the potential of urban light rail to help relieve congestion and pollution. [163054]

Mr. McNulty: We recognise that urban light rail is one of the possible measures that can help relieve congestion and pollution. A number of light rail schemes are under development. These are appraised according to the Departments' New Approach To Appraisal framework which assesses how significant these impacts are alongside other criteria and whether a scheme represents value for money.

Vehicle Excise Duty

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many motor vehicles have been crushed in the last six months for which figures are available for non-payment of vehicle excise duty; in how many of these cases the owner initially objected thereto; and if he will make a statement. [165170]

Dr. Howells: Between 1 October 2003 and 30 March 2004, DVLA and local authorities with devolved clamping powers clamped 30,500 unlicensed vehicles. Of these 14,600 were disposed of by crushing as they were in too poor a condition to put back on the road.

No figures are available for the number of vehicle keepers who initially objected. However crushing is treated as the final option when disposing of vehicles. Every effort is made to contact the current keeper when unlicensed vehicles are clamped and vehicles are kept in pounds for a minimum of seven days for this purpose. It is only after it becomes clear that the keeper cannot be identified or they provide a disclaimer that vehicles are disposed of by crushing.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Community Relations Core Funding Scheme

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will meet representatives from the Christian Education Movement to discuss the new round of the Community Relations Core Funding Scheme 2004 to 2007. [164389]

Jane Kennedy: I understand that the Christian Education Movement is currently in the process of pursuing the formal appeal process in connection with the Department of Education's decision not to provide funding under the Community Relations Core Funding Scheme for the period April 2004 to 2007. In the circumstances, it would not be appropriate for Ministers to intervene.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the advisory group established to hear appeals from unsuccessful applicants for the Community Relations Core Funding Scheme 2004 to 2007 will meet; who its members are; and on what basis each member was chosen. [164391]

Jane Kennedy: The members of the Advisory Panel, which was set up to assist the Department of Education in considering applications for funding from the Community Relations Core Funding Scheme are:

Member	
Tom McCready	Non-scoring Chairman, Head of Youth Services and Community Relations Branch, DE
Phyllis Richardson	Community Relations Branch, DE
Walker Ewart	Education and Training Inspectorate, DE
Norman Richardson	Lecturer, Stranmillis College
Gerard Doran	Youth Officer, Southern Education and Library Board
June Neill	Assistant Advisory Officer, Western Education and Library Board
Brendan Hartop	UNESCO Centre, University of Ulster

The members of the Advisory Panel were appointed from a broad spectrum of educational interests because of their expertise in community relations policy and practice.

The Advisory Panel also has a role in assisting the Department in its consideration of formal appeals against the Department's decision not to fund certain organisations. The Advisory Panel will consider and offer advice to the Department on each appeal as it arises and on the basis of its individual merits. There will be no single meeting held to consider all appeals received.

Electricity

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what reports he has received on proposals to generate electricity from lignite in Northern Ireland. [164055]

Mr. Pearson: None.

Health Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of *(a)* residential care and *(b)* nursing home places in Northern Ireland are provided by independent charities or non-profit organisations. [164914]

Angela Smith: Information on the number of residential care and nursing home places according to whether they are provided by independent charities or non-profit organisations is not collected centrally. However, information is available on total places provided by all voluntary organisations. At 31 March 2003, 29 per cent. of available residential care places and nine per cent. of available nursing home places were provided by such organisations.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many allergy sufferers he estimates there are in the Province. [164926]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Duchenne muscular dystrophy sufferers he estimates there are in the Province. [164927]

Angela Smith: Research conducted in 2003 indicates that there are 62 Duchenne muscular dystrophy sufferers in the province, a prevalence of 3.5 per 100,000 population.

Hospital Funding

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list *(a)* the meetings he has held and *(b)* the correspondence he has had with representatives from (i) The Ulster Hospital, Dundonald and (ii) The Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust in relation to the funding shortfall within the Trust. [164534]

Angela Smith: I have not had any meetings with the Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust nor received any correspondence on this issue. Meetings regarding funding would normally take place between the Board and Trust, with the Department regularly updated on progress and any relevant issues.

Illegal Dumping

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the costs resulting from illegal dumping in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [164850]

Angela Smith: The term "illegal dumping" may be taken to include a wide range of illegal waste management activities ranging from small-scale dumping, referred to as 'fly-tipping', through to the use of sites to dispose illegally of significant quantities of waste.

An illegal site containing in the region of 10,000 tonnes of waste may cost approximately 1,000,000 to remediate by waste removal. The total number of such sites in Northern Ireland is not known. However, my Department's Environment and Heritage Service is currently investigating 20 sites ranging in capacity from 5,000 to 26,000 tonnes.

In addition to the cost of remediation of illegal sites, illegal dumping also impacts adversely, in competitive terms, on those operating legitimate waste management businesses.

Invest NI

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are taken by Invest NI to establish whether companies applying for grants have a solvent pension scheme. [164069]

Mr. Pearson: The issue of solvency of the pension fund of a company seeking assistance from Invest NI only arises in relation to larger operations that provide defined benefit schemes to their employees.

From an industrial development perspective, the important issue is the ability of an applicant company to demonstrate that it can fund its proposal for assistance in the context of all of its liabilities, including those relating to the pension scheme. Under Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 17, the statutory accounts of a company must disclose full details of any liability to the pension fund. Invest NI would therefore become aware of any pension scheme insolvency issues through a company's most recent statutory accounts.

Organ Retention

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the television advertising campaign to notify people in Northern Ireland about post mortems and organ retention will commence; and how many leaflets on the subject have so far been distributed in the Province. [164578]

Angela Smith: An ongoing multi-media campaign has been running since June 2002, when the Human Organs Inquiry report was published. A sub-committee of the Department's Human Organs Implementation Steering Group is tasked with managing this campaign in conjunction with a firm of PR/Advertising consultants. No decision to use TV advertising has yet been taken but the campaign is kept under review.

Almost 700,000 of the Department's leaflet "Post Mortem Examinations and the Human Organs Inquiry—Important New Information for Everyone in Northern Ireland" have been distributed throughout Northern Ireland. These have been delivered to homes by the Royal Mail and circulated through HPSS networks.

A further 18,500 leaflets about the Human Organs Enquiry Line (NI) have also been distributed by Enquiry Line staff.

Pulmonary Hypertension

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pulmonary hypertension sufferers there were in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [164537]

Angela Smith: Information is not available on the number of pulmonary hypertension sufferers in Northern Ireland. Information is, however, available on the number of people admitted to hospitals in Northern Ireland each year suffering from pulmonary hypertension, and is shown for the years 1998–99 to 2002–03 and is shown in the following table.

	Numbers admitted to hospital with pulmonary hypertension
1998–99	74
1999–2000	91
2000–01	88
2001–02	122
2002–03	197

School Finance

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to what extent the Common Funding Formula for schools has been implemented; what the timescale is for full implementation; what criteria are being used to determine the timescale for implementation; and what steps are being taken to ensure children in the more rural board areas are not adversely affected by the timescale for implementation. [164192]

Jane Kennedy: The Common Funding Formula (CFF) has not been implemented. The plan is to consult schools on the final proposals for the CFF shortly, with the aim of implementing Common Funding in April 2005. The implementation of Common Funding will be undertaken within finite budgetary constraints, and central to this will be the issue of manageability, especially for schools facing reductions in their relative budget share. All existing Funding Formulae contain a Small School Factor to facilitate the delivery of the curriculum. Small schools with above average teaching costs may also receive additional support through the Teachers' Salary Protection Factor.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which schools in the South Eastern Education and Library Board area are *(a)* experiencing financial deficit and *(b)* projected to face a financial deficit in the next financial year. [164434]

Jane Kennedy: I understand from the Chief Executive of the South-Eastern Education and Library Board that the following schools are expected to have a deficit at 31 March 2004:

Ballycarrickmaddy Primary School
Carr Primary School
Carryduff Primary School
Castle Gardens Primary School
Comber Primary School
Cregagh Primary School
Crossgar Primary School
Donaghadee High School
Downshire Primary School
Gilnahirk Primary School
Glencraig Primary School
Groomsport Primary School
Hillhall Primary School
Holywood Primary School
Kilmaine Primary School
Lambeg Primary School
Legamaddy Primary School
Londonderry Primary School
Newport Primary School
Newtownards Model Primary School
Newtownbreda Primary School
Old Warren Primary School
Our Lady Queen of Peace Primary School
Priory College
Redburn Primary School
Sacred Heart Primary School
St. Colman's Primary School, Lisburn
St. Colman's Primary School, Moira
St. Joseph's Primary School, Carryduff
St. Joseph's Primary School, Strangford
St. Joseph's Primary School, Downpatrick
St. Joseph's Primary School, Crossgar
St. Malachy's Primary School
St. Mary's Primary School, Portaferry
St. Mary's Primary School, Killyleagh
St. Patrick's Primary School
Tyrella Primary School

Information for the next financial year is not yet available.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Bogus Traders

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many bogus traders have been reported in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* England and Wales in each year since 1997. [165072]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This information is not available centrally.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many bogus traders have been convicted for illegal practices in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* England and Wales in each year since 1997. [165074]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This information is not available centrally.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the average age of those targeted by bogus traders in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the UK, in each year since 1997. [165111]

Mr. Sutcliffe: No such assessment has been made.

Miners' Pension Schemes

Tony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total sum is that has been taken to date by the Treasury from the miners' pension schemes under the terms of the 1994 agreement. [163241]

Nigel Griffiths: The receipts from the two schemes since payments began in 1996–97 are as follows:

£ million

	BCSSS	*MPS*	*Total*
1996–97	39.5	0.0	39.5
1997–98	39.5	113.0	152.5
1998–99	107.1	113.0	220.1
1999–2000	107.1	0.0	107.1
2000–01	110.3	315.0	425.3
2001–02	216.0	196.0	412.0
2002–03	216.0	196.0	412.0
2003–04	216.0	175.0	391.0
Total	1,051.5	1,108.0	2,159.5

The terms of the 1994 agreement have meant that similar amounts have been available to the trustees to award substantial bonuses of around 30 per cent. to the schemes' members.

Rogue Traders

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government are taking to tackle the problem of rogue traders. [165075]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government have introduced a number of new measures to empower and inform consumers.

The Enterprise Act 2002 introduced a new concept of supercomplaints. It provided the legislative framework for the Office of Fair Trading to conduct an investigation of the doorstep selling market in response to supercomplaint from NACAB (now Citizen's Advice). The OFT's report is expected shortly.

The Enterprise Act also included provisions to strengthen the powers available to enforcement authorities to tackle the activities of rogue traders. The Stop Now Orders, first introduced in 2001 by implementation of the Injunctions Directive in the UK, created a new enforcement regime across a wide range of consumer protection legislation. They enabled designated enforcement authorities to apply to the courts for "Stop Now Orders" to stop the practices of rogue traders if they are acting against the collective interests of consumers. The Enterprise Act has extended that protection across an even wider range of consumer protection—particularly in the service sector.

Another way in which we are informing and empowering consumers is the development of Consumer Support Networks (CSNs). These bring together organisations to plan and deliver better, more accessible and more joined-up support for local consumers. Across Britain, the Networks are helping to raise awareness of consumer issues. This includes considerable emphasis on issues relating to sales in the home, particularly for vulnerable or older consumers.

The Government has made up to £30 million of new money available over a 3 year period to roll out a new national consumer helpline—Consumer Direct. With a single, widely publicised number, it will be a powerful tool for consumer advice across Britain. Consumers, no matter where they live, will be able to access reliable, independent help on consumer matters via their own phone, for the price of a local rate call. For those who prefer it, the service will be available on-line.

Better Regulation Task Force

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action her Department has taken to implement the recommendation of the Better Regulation Task Force report of May 2002 that there be independent expert input into considering alternatives to state regulation. [161147]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department has appointed two independent experts to examine alternatives to regulation following the Better Regulation Task Force report.

Bridges Community Development

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much public finance from the Bridges Community Development Venture Fund has been invested in Crosby. [164366]

Nigel Griffiths: The Fund Manager, Bridges Community Ventures Ltd. has confirmed that as at the end of December 2003, the Bridge Community Development Venture Fund has invested over £5 million

in nine small and medium enterprises located within disadvantaged wards in England. The Fund Manger did not identify any investment opportunities specifically in Crosby.

Business Link

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many small businesses in Crosby have received advice from Business Link. [164410]

Nigel Griffiths: Greater Merseyside Enterprise Ltd. (Business Link Operator for Merseyside) has provided advice to 126 companies within the Crosby constituency area since April 2001.

Carbon Monoxide

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will meet ministerial colleagues from other Departments at the earliest opportunity to discuss ways in which to alert the public to the dangers of carbon monoxide leakage from faulty gas appliances. [163388]

Mr. Browne: I have no present plans to meet ministerial colleagues, as awareness-raising is already being undertaken by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the industry, including the Council for Registered Gas Installers (CORGI), in conjunction with the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Health.

Child Poverty (Minimum Income Standards)

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what recent consultation she has conducted with *(a)* young people and *(b)* adults on low income in relation to minimum income standards; [164254]

(2) if she will establish an independent minimum income standards commission to tackle poverty in the UK; and if she will make a statement; [164282]

(3) what recent representations she has received on minimum income standards; and if she will make a statement; [164283]

(4) what research has been *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* collated by her Department on minimum income standards. [164284]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

When we launched our consultation exercise, Measuring Child Poverty, in April 2002, we sought views from a wide range of interested parties, including academics and poverty experts, as well as children, young people and adults with direct experience of poverty. The final conclusions of this consultation were published as Measuring Child Poverty in December 2003; a copy is available in the Library.

We have received a number of representations on minimum income standards from hon. Members, through parliamentary questions and correspondence. This topic has always engendered interest from interested lobby groups and members of the public.

We commission research to inform and evaluate policies aimed at alleviating poverty, but there is no accepted single research method that can be used to calculate a minimum income standard for all families. What people need to live on varies greatly, and is dependant on a range of factors.

Poverty is wider than income alone. We have a comprehensive strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion, and our annual report "Opportunity for all" sets out how we are tackling the problems faced by individuals throughout their lives.

We have no plans to establish an independent minimum income standards commission.

Companies House/Insolvency Service

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the 2003–04 performance targets were for *(a)* Companies House and *(b)* the Insolvency Service; and what the level of performance was against each target. [165126]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The following table sets out The Insolvency Service's performance against published targets and indicators for the first 11 months of 2003–04 to 29 February 2004.

Key target and performance indicators 2003–04

	Percentage	
Percentage of user satisfaction as measured by the User Satisfaction Index	86	81
Number of complete case administrations	26,000	26,239
The average time of concluding disqualification proceedings in months	24	22.4
Percentage of disqualification cases concluded within:		
30 Months	85	71.7
24 Months	60	41.7
Action invoices for payment within:		
30 days of receipt	100	98.99
20 days of receipt	97	96.26
Action Insolvency Services Account payments within 4 days of receipt	98	97.3
Action Redundancy Payment claims within 6 weeks	82	88.59
Contain the increase in the cost of administration	+1	[1]—
Contain the increase in the cost of investigating cases	+10	[1]—

[1] Not yet available

The following table shows Companies House performance against published targets and indicators for the first 11 months of 2003–04 to 29 February 2004.

Percentage

	2003–04 target	*Achieved to 29 February 2004*
To maintain on average a monthly compliance rate for accounts submitted	95	96
Data capture accuracy of all forms submitted to Companies House	96.5 error free	95
Image quality of all images placed on the image system	98 error free	97
Product and service availability on CHD (7am to 8pm Monday to Friday)	98 of the time	98
Product and service availability on website (7am to 8pm Monday to Friday)	98 of the time	98
Resolve complaints within five days	97	98
Reply to MPs' letters to the Chief Executive within 10 days	100	100
Achieve a score of more than 80 per cent. in each quarterly Companies House customer satisfaction survey	More than 80	85
Unit cost reduction on document registration in real terms	3	[1]
Average rate of return based on the operating surplus as percentage of average net assets	Average 6	[1]
Payment of bills within 30 days, or on other agreed credit terms, on receipt of goods or services or a valid invoice	100	100

[1] Not yet available

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she expects to reply to the letter to her of 23 January 2004 from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire. [165132]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: My noble Friend the Minister for Science and Innovation replied to the letter in 31 March 2004.

Departmental Buildings

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* renovation and *(b)* maintenance projects on buildings (i) owned and (ii) rented by her Department were undertaken in each of the last five years; and what the associated costs were of each. [163951]

Ms Hewitt: My Department undertakes a wide variety of projects as part of on-going maintenance and improvements of its current stock. The total capital cost of minor works, maintenance, and renovation projects involving significant works to the building services and fabric, over the last five years are as follows:

Financial year	*£ million*
1999–2000	2.15
2000–01	1.80
2001–02	4.75
2002–03	2.20
2003–04	2.30

Those of a significant value are as follows:

Works projects over £1 million in value

	Financial year				
	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Abbey Orchard Street Fit-out	878	202	—	—	—
1 Victoria Street and Kingsgate House Lift Refurbishment	1,004	—	100	—	—
1 Victoria Street Conference Centre Extension	—	416	2,711	—	—
Elizabeth House Fit-out	—	—	—	729	—

Departmental Officials

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which former officials of the Department have asked for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst and Young and *(d)* KPMG. [156899]

Ms Hewitt: DTI civil servants like all civil servants are subject to the Business Appointment Rules, which set out the circumstances in which they must seek permission to accept outside appointments within two years of leaving the service. A copy of the Rules is available in the Libraries of the House. Information about appointments taken up by the most senior staff are published in the annual reports of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments.

Since 2001 the following have sought permission under the Business Appointment Rules to join the firms named.

(a) PricewaterhouseCoopers—One retired Senior Civil Servant

(b) Deloitte & Touche—None

(c) Ernst and Young—None

(d) KPMG—One former Insolvency Service Examiner

Employment Agencies

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the employment agencies which her Department has used to supply temporary staff in each financial year since 1996–97 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [163815]

Ms Hewitt: The following list is of those employment agencies that have supplied my Department with temporary staff for the calendar year 2003. However,

the information requested for the period 1996 to 2002 is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The DTI has had a formal agreement with Adecco, since 1 December 2002, and most of its requirements for temporary staff are met by Adecco. However, the Department uses the services of other employment agencies, where they can supply temporary staff with specific skills.

Aberdeen Appointments
Accountancy additions
Adecco UK Ltd.
Alex Lawrie Factors Ltd.
Badenoch and Clark Ltd.
Blue Arrow
Brook Street (UK) Ltd.
Carlisle Staffing Services
Champion Employment Ltd.
Excel Recruitment Ltd
Hays Accountancy Personnel
Hays Montrose
Headway Recruitment
Jones Yarrell and Company
Josephine Sammons Ltd.
Kelly Services (UK) Ltd.
Keychain Ltd.
LNA Associates Ltd.
Manpower UK Ltd.
Michael Page Marketing
Murphine Capital Recruitment
Office Angels Ltd.
PSD Group
Reed Accountancy Personnel
Reed Personnel Service
Reed Solutions plc

Energy Supplies

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps have been taken by her Department to ensure energy supplies to the United Kingdom once North Sea reserves have expired. [165078]

Mr. Timms: Maintaining reliable energy supplies, now and in the future, is one of the key goals for UK energy policy set out in the Energy White Paper published in February 2003. It set out how the Government is working with industry to maximise the economic potential of our North Sea reserves, particularly through the PILOT initiative.

However, the White Paper also noted that it is likely that the UK will become a net importer of gas on an annual basis by around 2006 and of oil by around 2010. By 2020 we are likely to be importing around three-quarters of our primary energy needs.

The UK will then be in the same position as most other advanced industrial economies which already import significant proportions of their energy need without noticeable disruption. Import dependency has long been a fact of life for all the G7 countries apart from the UK and Canada.

Oil and currently to a lesser extent gas are internationally traded commodities. And all countries, whether import-dependent or not, have a common interest in promoting open markets and predictable prices.

Current gas import infrastructure projects would facilitate imports from Norway, Netherlands, Russia, Qatar, Algeria, other LNG exporters, or other sources of piped gas or LNG into continental Europe. For example, we have agreed the key principles of a new agreement with Norway which will facilitate a range of cross boundary oil and gas developments including the construction of a pipeline between Norwegian offshore infrastructure and the Easington terminal in the UK. This pipeline will deliver dry gas from Norway's Ormen Lange field and when operational will be capable of delivering up to 20 per cent. of the UK's gas demand.

The expansion of renewable energy is also important for the contribution it will make to ensuring secure energy supplies (as well as to achieving our environmental goals). Our recent Renewables Innovation Review was very clear on the future costs of all renewables technologies and we can see that renewables offer the best opportunity for the new capacity we need. We have set as our first goal obtaining 10 per cent. of our electricity from renewable sources by 2010, with the aspiration of doubling this by 2020.

Wind energy, as the form of renewable energy with far the best immediate prospects for expansion, will play a very big part in this expansion. Through capital and research grants, we are also encouraging the development of other forms of renewable energy such as biomass and energy crops, photovoltaic and wave and tidal energy, so as to create a much more diversified renewable energy sector over the longer term.

As stated in the Energy White Paper: while The Government does not have specific proposals for new nuclear build now, we do not rule out the possibility that at some point in the future new build might be necessary to meet our carbon targets.

Entrepreneurship

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to promote entrepreneurship as a career option for graduates. [163315]

Nigel Griffiths: The Small Business Service and the Department for Education and Skills have collaborated to help establish the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE), as a private company limited by guarantee. The NCGE will promote the idea of starting a business as a viable career option for students and graduates. Six Directors have so far been appointed to the Board of the NCGE, with David Frost (Director General, British Chambers of Commerce) acting as interim Chairman and Karan Bilimoria (Founder and Chief Executive, Cobra Beer) recruited as the Council's Graduate Entrepreneur Champion.

The establishment of the Council builds upon support already provided by Government to help promote Entrepreneurship as a viable career option to students and graduates. The Small Business Service provides support of around £1 million per annum to support organisations

such as Enterprise Insight, Young Enterprise, Shell LiveWIRE and Graduate Prospects in undertaking enterprise awareness and enterprise education activities aimed at young people. Each has a focus within their activities of providing practical advice and information to graduates.

Flexible Hours

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of employers who offer flexible hours of work to employees, broken down by sector. [163543]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The following table is taken from the DTI commissioned report: "The Second Work-Life Balance Study: Results from the Employers Survey Main Report". The study was a large cross sectional survey which yielded nationally representative data of employers provision of flexible working time practices and leave arrangements.

This report is one of a number of reports on Work-life Balance and Flexible Working which form part of the Department's ongoing research programme on employment relations and labour market issues. Such studies are placed in the Libraries of the House upon publication.

Figure 1

Percentage

Standard industrial	*Part-time*	*Term-time*	*Job share*	*Flexitime*	*Compressed hours*	*Annualised hours*	*Reduced hours*
Agriculture, fishing and mining	29	8	5	15	6	11	11
Manufacturing	33	4	5	15	4	6	12
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	(48)	(5)	(10)	(12)	(5)	(—)	(10)
Construction	51	1	4	12	2	4	5
Wholesale and Retail trade	17	11	3	17	4	6	13
Hotels and Restaurants	4	23	10	31	11	11	33
Transport, Storage and Communication	29	3	4	16	8	4	14
Financial Intermediation	(6)	(10)	(10)	(24)	(18)	(8)	(21)
Real Estate, and Business Acts.	21	5	17	28	10	5	14
Public Administration and Defence	4	21	50	71	11	7	28
Education	2	81	45	21	4	24	10
Health and Social Work	13	13	15	35	12	5	19
Other Community	12	8	20	30	7	13	10
All Workplaces	74	16	14	24	7	8	15

Miners' Compensation

Mr. Kevin Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many miners' compensation claims the solicitors Frank Allen Pennington of Doncaster have handled to date; and how much they have received in fees. [163982]

Nigel Griffiths: As of 25 March 2004 the figures are as follows:

	COPD	*VWF*
Total claims registered (Number)	369	509
Total solicitors costs (£)	269,789	283,132

National Institute for Medical Research

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the future of the National Institute for Medical Research, Mill Hill. [163844]

Ms Hewitt: The Medical Research Council (MRC) has established an expert Task Force to make recommendations to MRC Council on the future of the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR). Their interim report will be available on the MRC website shortly.

It is expected that a decision on the future of NIMR will be announced by MRC in the summer.

National Minimum Wage

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact of the introduction of the National Minimum Wage for 16 to 17-year-olds on the numbers of young people staying in education or training until the age of 18. [164550]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government are committed to ensuring that young people reach the age of 19 with the skills they need to compete in a modern, global economy. Our ambition is that UK staying-on rates after 16 should be among the highest in the OECD.

The new minimum wage rate that will be introduced for 16 and 17-year-old workers at £3.00 per hour with effect from 1 October 2004 has been set with this concern very much in mind. First, the great majority of young workers are already being paid in excess of this rate, and research commissioned by the Low Pay Commission for their latest report concluded that a new minimum wage rate introduced at this level would have negligible effects on education participation. Second, Education Maintenance Allowances will be implemented nationally this autumn and these will provide payments of up to £30 per week for young people who choose to continue in full-time education after reaching compulsory school leaving age. The report of the 16–19 Financial Support Review, "Supporting young people to achieve: towards a new deal for skills", was published alongside the budget. That report sets out the Government's proposals to ensure that young people aged 16–19 have the support and incentives they need to participate in education and training.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many complaints in each year since its introduction have been received relating to alleged underpayment of the national minimum wage; how many of these complaints in each year have been investigated; how many employers in each year were found not to be complying with the national minimum wage requirements; and what the level of underpayment of the national minimum wage identified in each year was. [164171]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The data requested is provided in the following table.

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*[1]2003–04*
Number of complaints	4,682	2,365	1,722	1,998	1,786
Number investigated	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of employers not complying (£)	1,280	2,119	1,937	1,996	1,961
Underpayment identified	1,242,341	3,034,373	5,135,799	3,585,941	2,253,176

[1] Up to February 2004

Note

The Inland Revenue investigate all complaints about underpayment of the minimum wage. In addition to complaints, they also use tax credit and other data to identify employers who they believe may not be compliant with the minimum wage.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) pursuant to her answer of 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1683W, on the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, when her officials have been actively seeking new spent nuclear fuel reprocessing contracts in the last 24 months; [164809]

(2) pursuant to her answer of 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1683W, on the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, whether the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority will be seeking new spent fuel reprocessing contracts. [164810]

Mr. Timms: My officials have taken no steps to actively seek new reprocessing contracts in the last 24 months. It will be matter for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority to decide whether or not to seek new reprocessing contracts once it is established.

Before any new THORP contacts could be concluded or changes made to existing contracts that increased volume of spent fuel to be reprocessed at THORP, the approval of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry would be required. Before making any decision on any such future proposal, the Government would review it against the specific criteria that were set out in the July 2002 White Paper on Managing the Nuclear Legacy.

R and D (Crosby)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many research and development grants have been given to businesses in Crosby from Business Link. [164367]

Nigel Griffiths: There have been two offers made and accepted of Smart grant (now Research and Development Grant) in the Crosby area since 1997 with a total value of £154,401.

The number of Research and Development Grant offered to Businesses in the whole of the Merseyside area since 2000, is 102 with value of claims paid to the sum of £3,704,694.

Regional Development Agencies

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the locations of the overseas *(a)* offices and *(b)* representations of each regional development agency; what the cost is of each of these representations; and how many staff were employed in each in the last financial year for which figures are available. [164608]

Jacqui Smith: I refer the hon. Member to my answers of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 73–76W and 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 999–1000W.

Phoenix Fund

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been allocated to Crosby from the Phoenix Fund. [164411]

Nigel Griffiths: Seven CDFFs (Community Development Finance Institutions), which is covered by the Phoenix fund, are currently supported in the North West region of which one (Train 2000 Ltd.) is Merseyside based. Train 2000 have been awarded £516,757 (revenue support £109,257; capital support £407,500) and to-date have advanced 30 loans, one of which was to a woman entrepreneur within the Crosby constituency.

Train 2000's principal target group is female entrepreneurs unable to access business finance from conventional sources.

Train 2000 have been successful in receiving funding from the Phoenix Development Fund as well as from CDFI (Community Development Finance Institutions).

North West

Total Support currently committed to NW CDFI's (Community Development Finance Institutions) is £4,844,932 (expected to rise to £6,934,889 after completion of the third process). To date 232 loans has been advanced within the North West region totalling £1,398,725.

There are no Phoenix Development Fund Projects that focus solely on Crosby, however Crosby will be covered by those projects listed as operating in the whole of Liverpool, Merseyside and the North West. The Phoenix Development Fund Projects, which fall within the North West are as follows.

£

Project	Phoenix Development Fund (to March 2004)	Phoenix Development fund Building on the Best April 2004-March 2006)	City growth Strategies (April 2004-March 2006)	City Growth Strategies (April 2004-March 2006)	Development Fund for Rural Renewal (to March 2004)	Area Covered
Granby and Toxteth Development Trust	26,988	—	—	—	—	Granby and Toxteth
Dingle Opportunities	778,783	—	—	—	—	11 Objective 1 Pathway Areas in Liverpool (no mention of Crosby
Train 2000	225,000	799,000	—	—	—	Merseyside
Knowsley MBC	17,483	—	—	—	—	Knowsley
St. Helens Chamber	471,462	—	—	—	—	St. Helen's
St. Helens (via North West RDA)	—	—	375,000	—	—	St. Helen's
Womens Business Network North West	242,520	—	—	—	—	North West
Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts	254,782	528,000	—	—	—	North West
Cats Pyjamas	371,000	—	—	—	—	Liverpool
Liverpool (via North West RDA)	—	—	—	250,000	—	Liverpool
Manchester (via North West RDA)	—	—	—	250,000	—	Manchester
Other NW	1,470,000	—	—	—	814,200	NW outside Merseyside

Included in the above is information about City Growth and Development Fund for Rural Renewal, which comes under the Phoenix fund.

Regeneration (Hampshire)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what analysis underpinned the creation of a priority area for economic regeneration between Portsmouth and Southampton; what the objectives were of establishing this scheme; and to what extent these objectives have been achieved. [165316]

Jacqui Smith: The South Hampshire Priority Area for Economic Regeneration is broadly defined in Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9 2001). The area was originally proposed by SERPLAN (the South East Regional Planning Body in 2001) in their draft RPG, and was confirmed by the Panel following a Public Examination in 1999. The report of the panel provides further justification for the designation, but criteria included: above average unemployment levels, high levels of social deprivation, low skill levels, dependence on declining industries, derelict urban fabric, peripherally and insularity.

Within the South East Regional Planning Guidance the recommendation was that all the areas identified as Priority Areas for Economic Regeneration (PAERs) need tailored regeneration strategies backed up by appropriate resources to address their problems and maximise their contribution to the sustainable development of the region. Designation as a PAER signalled to regional partners, including the Regional Development Agency, that the needs of the area should be given high priority. As such, the South Hampshire Priority Area for Economic Regeneration is not a scheme. The objectives for the area are set out in RPG 9 (2001), in particular Policy RE7 and Chapter 12. The policy calls for local and regional partners to give particular attention to actively supporting economic regeneration and renewal, including inward investment.

In line with the signals given through designation of the area as a PAER, regional partners, including the South East England Regional Development Agency (SEEDA), have given the area a high priority.

The Regional Assembly, in partnership with local authorities, is currently assessing whether a sub-regional strategy for the South Hampshire area should be prepared as part of the South East Plan

Register of Interests

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the requirements are on officials in her Department to declare current interests; and what register of interests is kept for her departmental officials. [164699]

Ms Hewitt: All members of staff within the Department are required to inform their senior line managers if they have any private business interests which could possibly conflict with their position in the Department or one of its Agencies. Staff are required to carry out any instructions which the Department or Agency gives about the retention or disposal of those business interests.

Detailed general principles that must be observed in respect of business interests and outside occupations are set out in "The Guide" available to all staff.

There is no central register maintained of the interests of individual departmental officials.

Research Funding

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial assistance is available towards collaborative research projects involving business and universities in the field of digital archiving technologies; which projects she *(a)* has assisted since 2001 and *(b)* is supporting; and whether her policy is available on a website. [164450]

Jacqui Smith: Financial assistance for collaborative research to support such technologies will be available under DTIs Technology programme to be formally announced on 26 April 2004. Assistance up to 75 per cent. for basic, 50 per cent. for applied and 25 per cent. for nearer market research projects will be available for industry to academic collaborations and 50 per cent. 40 per cent. and 25 per cent. respectively for projects involving business to business collaborations. The support will be available for projects that address research into such aspects of digital archiving as: Meta-data, Semantics, Ontologies, Vocabularies and

Lexicons. The Innovation Report, which introduces DTI Technology Programme is available from DTIs website www.dti.gov.uk/technologyprogramme. The details for applying to the Technology Programme and a description of the technology priorities covered will be placed on DTI website in early April.

Since 2001, the Department has provided £1.1 million within the e-Science Core programme to establish the Digital Curation Centre at the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Bath and the Central Laboratories of the Research Councils. Details are available through www.nesc.ac.uk, and www.e-science.clrc.ac.uk/web/projects/Data_Curation_Centre.

A further £3 million of assistance has been provided to support nine projects in the information storage and display area within the LINK Information Storage and Displays programme.

Self-employment

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to reduce the gap between male and female self-employment rates. [163311]

Nigel Griffiths: The Government's Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise is working through key strategic partners in the regions, in particular, the Regional Development Agencies, the Business Link network and a number of women's enterprise organisations.

All 45 Business Link operators have women's enterprise as a key delivery theme for their activity.

We are encouraged by the findings on women's enterprise of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's most recent report, which states that the levels of female entrepreneurship in the UK rose from around 600,000 in 2002 to around 700,000 in 2003 and that female attitudes to start-up have become far more positive during the last year.

Small Businesses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she has taken to reduce the barriers to start-up for small businesses. [163316]

Nigel Griffiths: The Government are working with its public, private and voluntary sector partners to help start-up businesses to address and overcome early hurdles and barriers to success through the provision of high quality information, advice and support. A range of new actions the Government are undertaking to help start-up businesses to overcome barriers are set out in the "A Government action plan for small business", which was published in January 2004.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice her Department offers via Business Link operators to small manufacturing businesses of fewer than 10 employees seeking to improve their internal business practice. [165120]

Nigel Griffiths: Business Link operators offer straightforward information on small manufacturing business needs, and access to a wide network of business support organisations. From April advice will be delivered via a new DTI Business Support framework based on four main customer themes. Technology and Innovation, Access to Finance, Achieving Best Practice and Regional Investment. Our goals are to make strategic investments in business support in order to help drive up productivity, to improve delivery of business support and to develop better customer relationships.

The Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) has been highly successful as a source of practical help to manufacturers. The Department is keen for this success to continue. The Department is currently discussing the future development of MAS with the English RDAs and Welsh Development Agency, including the determination of future funding arrangements for MAS post March 2005. We are also discussing with RDAs and other stakeholders how best to ensure that MAS co-ordinates effectively within the new DTI Business Support framework, in particular the Support to implement Best Business Practice product (Product 10) that will be delivered through Business Links from April 2004. With emphasis on SMEs.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol Misuse

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what public expenditure there has been by drug action teams on countering the problems caused by alcohol misuse in *(a)* Taunton and *(b)* the South West in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [164782]

Caroline Flint: The information is not available in the format requested. Drug Action Teams (DATs) are funded to tackle drug misuse via the pooled treatment budget and local monies from Primary Care Trusts and Social Services mainstream funds. Further budgets are also available for prevention activities for young people. Alcohol funds are allocated at a local level and usually cannot be disaggregated from mainstream drugs or mental health expenditure.

Animal Experiments

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his Answer of 17 March 2004 *Official Report,* column 336W, on animal experiments, if he will make it his policy to encourage the formation of a European Union wide animals (scientific procedures) inspectorate. [164642]

Caroline Flint: No.

Article 19(5) of European Directive 86/609/EEC—on the approximation of laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the member states regarding the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes—requires that establishments licensed to use animals in scientific procedures shall be subject to periodic inspection by representatives of the National Competent Authority.

Section 18 of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, which transposes the Directive into United Kingdom law, provides for the appointment of inspectors to advise on applications for licences and

certificates under the Act and to visit places where regulated procedures are carried out to determine whether the conditions of licences and certificates are being complied with.

The Government are satisfied that the Home Office Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate, as set up under section 18, is highly effective in carrying out its duties and responsibilities. We do not consider that a European Inspectorate would add to, or improve on, what the Home Office Inspectorate already does. Nor do we consider that it would be practicable, given the diverse range of national regulatory systems. The Government are also concerned that the establishment of another tier of inspection, if that is what is being suggested, would place an unnecessary additional administrative burden on the scientific community.

We understand that this may also be the view emerging from the discussions taking place in the context of the review of European Directive 86/609/EEC currently being undertaken by the European Commission.

Cannabis

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 17 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 338W, on cannabis, when he expects to publish the results of the evaluation into the effectiveness of the advertising campaign on the reclassification of cannabis. [164955]

Caroline Flint: The final report is currently being collated and it is expected that it will be placed in the Library of the House by early May.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150260]

Fiona Mactaggart: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1294W.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of civil servants in his Department are of Asian origin. [163587]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office currently employs 2,739 staff who are known to be of Asian origin. This represents 5.35 per cent. of the 69 per cent. of Home Office staff whose ethnicity is known.

Community Development Exchange

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the members of the Community Development Exchange; how they are appointed, and for how long; and to whom they are accountable. [163029]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Community Development Exchange (CDX), is an independent non-governmental organisation that acts as the national membership organisation and voice for community development. The "members" of CDX are individuals and organisations made up of unpaid and paid practitioners, managers, policy officers and researchers from across the voluntary, community, private and public sectors, in a unique forum.

It is because of the independent nature of CDX that the Home Office does not hold a list of members; all members apply for membership to CDX and if accepted pay a yearly subscription; they can remain members for as long as they wish, subject to the payment of the annual subscription; and as independent individuals or organisations, CDX members are only accountable to themselves or their respective Boards of Management.

Credit Card Fraud

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers police have to *(a)* access mobile phone records and *(b)* liaise with internet service providers in order to track down the physical location and identity of those committing fraud involving transactions of less than £500,000. [164847]

Caroline Flint: Under Part 1 Chapter II of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, police are able to access communications data, including mobile phone records and information held by internet service providers, for the purposes of the prevention and detection of crime irrespective of the financial loss or gain incurred, to the extent that it is necessary and proportionate to do so.

Dalit Community

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures have been taken since September 2003 to tackle discriminatory practices against the Dalit community in the United Kingdom. [164267]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 29 March 2004]:* None that I am aware of. I would be willing to consider any evidence-based representations on the need for specific measures, but could not at this stage give an assurance that it would be right to take any.

The Race Relations Act 1976 protects people from racial discrimination in the fields of employment, education, training, housing and the provision of goods, facilities and services. The provisions of the Act apply equally to all people irrespective of colour, race, nationality and ethnic or national origin.

The Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 further improved the amended Race Relations Act. The Regulations relate to discrimination and harassment on the grounds of race or ethnic or national origins. It is unlawful to discriminate against another person on any of these grounds in any area covered by the legislation.

Caste based discrimination would be unlawful under current legislation if it could also be argued that the discrimination was also based on colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins (in the case of

employment, education, training, housing, provisions of goods, facilities, services and most other functions of public authorities) or religion (in the case of employment and training).

We acknowledge that there have been criticisms levelled at the Hindu caste system with regards to the treatment of Dalits. However, it is not the role of Government to take a position on the rites, beliefs or practices of any particular religious faith, other than where these give rise to conflict with the law.

Project Funding

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was spent by *(a)* the Government on solely state-financed projects and *(b)* the (i) Government and (ii) private sector on public-private and private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible in each of the last 10 years, broken down by region. [160962]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is as follows.

(a) Information on how much has been spent on major projects is not held centrally and to obtain this information would incur disproportionate costs.

(b) I would refer my hon. Friend to the Signed PFI Projects List, which can be found on the HM Treasury website www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public_private_partnerships/ppp_pfi_stats.

In addition payments made to the service provider on projects which are classed as public private partnerships are as follows:

	Project	
	Airwave	*Criminal Records Bureau*
Region	National	North west
Government spend	£50 million	£30.6 million
Private sector spend	Not available	Not available

Recruitment

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of recruitment of civil servants for the Department was in each financial year since 1996–97, broken down by *(a)* delegated or contracted out recruitment procedures and *(b)* recruitment procedures carried out by the Department. [158178]

Fiona Mactaggart: Details of the total spend on external recruitment for the central Home Office, including the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND), for the years 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 are shown in the table. Figures for previous years are not available. Final figures for 2003–04 will not be available until the end of the financial year.

The costs detailed in the table cover the costs of recruiting staff into the Home Office, including the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (but excluding Home Office Agencies) using external recruitment agencies. The IND figures reflect the extra recruitment in caseworkers to speed up processing times.

Details of the costs incurred for internal recruitment carried out by the department would be available only at disproportionate cost.

Money spent on external recruitment by the Home Office 2000–03

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Home Office (not covering immigration and Nationality Directorate or Home Office Agencies)			
Total recruitment spend	1,552,682	1,241,786	967,106
Immigration and Nationality Directorate			
Total Recruitment spend	3,696,892	2,261,122	3,041,458
Total	5,249,574	3,502,908	4,008,564

Sentencing Statistics

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners on remand were *(a)* acquitted and *(b)* given a non-custodial sentence in each of the last 10 years; and what proportion each figure forms of the total prison population in each of these years. [163252]

Paul Goggins: The first table gives information relating to the estimated number of prisoners received on remand who were *(a)* acquitted and *(b)* given a non-custodial sentence in each of the last 10 years.

The average annual population of remand prisoners from 1993 to 2002 is given in the second table. It is not possible to calculate the number received on remand who were later acquitted or given a non-custodial sentence as a proportion of the remand population. To do so would require the time served on remand for each of these prisoners which is not available. Secondly, some of the time spent on remand counts towards some, or all, of the sentence served.

Table 1: Final outcome for persons remanded in custody[1] at magistrates courts

Number of persons (thousand)

Final outcome	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Acquitted or not proceeded	11.4	13.5	14.4	16.5	21.4	25.2	25.6	23.8	21.7	21.6
Total non-custodial sentence	19.1	20.1	20.7	26.0	27.1	34.7	33.0	29.6	27.8	31.4
Total immediate custody	21.6	25.8	32.4	34.9	38.0	47.1	48.9	46.0	45.9	49.5
Total number sentenced	40.7	45.9	53.1	60.9	65.1	81.8	81.9	75.6	73.7	80.9
Total	52.1	59.5	67.6	77.4	86.5	107.0	107.5	99.4	95.4	102.5

[1] Includes those remanded for part of the time in custody.

Note:

Remand status shown is that given by the court.

Table 2: Average population of remand prisoners in custody[1] *1993 to 2002*

	Annual average
1993	10,674
1994	12,357
1995	11,375
1996	11,613
1997	12,131
1998	12,568
1999	12,520
2000	11,274
2001	11,238
2002	12,792

[1] Includes prisoners held in police cells in 1993 to 1995.

Speed Cameras

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his definition is of the term minimum conspicuity in relation to speed camera signs. [163625]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* I have been asked to reply.

The "Handbook of rules and guidance for the operation of the national road safety programme for England and Wales, October 2003", a copy of which is in the Library of the House, sets out in detail the standards for signing, marking, visibility and conspicuity of safety cameras.

Substance Misuse

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total budget allocated to substance misuse programmes for *(a)* drugs and *(b)* alcohol is in 2003–04. [162614]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* The information is as follows.

(a) Drugs—The total drug Pooled Treatment Budget for 2003–04 is £243.6 million. The pooled treatment budget is matched with approximately an additional £200 million of local monies from Primary Care Trust (PCT) and social services mainstream funds. The Pooled Treatment Budget provides funds for drugs only, not alcohol. The Prison Service also allocated £35.8 million for drug treatment programmes in prisons. Further budgets are also available for prevention activities for young people.

(b) Alcohol—Alcohol treatment services are funded from local monies from PCTs and social services mainstream funds.

Background:

In terms of drug funding, all Drug Action Teams (DATs) received an average increase of 24 per cent. in 2003–04.

The data on mainstream drugs spend are gathered via the DAT Treatment Plans by the National Treatment Agency (NTA).

Alcohol funds are allocated at a local level and usually cannot be disaggregated from mainstream drugs or mental health expenditure.

DEFENCE

Accommodation Costs

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* service personnel and *(b)* other Ministry of Defence employees are living in privately rented accommodation in the Greater Portsmouth area; and at what cost to his Department. [164618]

Mr. Caplin: Substitute Service Accommodation is provided when there is insufficient Service family housing or single living accommodation of the appropriate type to meet demand in the area. As at 31 March 2004, there are 100 service personnel living in privately rented accommodation in the Portsmouth area at a total cost of £82,000 per month.

For other Ministry of Defence employees their accommodation requirements are an individual responsibility, although the Department does, in certain circumstances, pay specific allowances to support its civilian staff when they are relocated.

Defence Contractors

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg) of 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1401W, on defence contractors, what contracts for the supply of equipment have been awarded to RUAG and are currently in operation; what action has been taken to enforce the contract under which supplies were suspended by the Swiss Government during the Iraq war; and for what reason he maintains no records centrally of similar contract breaches by other suppliers to his Department. [161778]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently three contracts in place with RUAG Ammotech GMBH, a wholly owned business subsidiary of RUAG, for the supply of ammunition and components. No action was taken against the company in respect of deliveries of 40 mm grenades suspended during the hostilities in Iraq, as this recognised the Swiss Government's long standing policy of neutrality. There was no impact of the operational effectiveness of British forces as available stocks were more than adequate to cover the Operation Telic requirements.

The incidents of similar contract breaches by other suppliers to the Ministry of Defence as a result of action by foreign governments is considered to be so low, that there is considered to be no value in collecting this type of information.

Departmental Buildings

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* renovation and *(b)* maintenance projects on buildings (i) owned and (ii) rented by his Department were undertaken in each of the last five years; and what the associated costs were of each. [163948]

Mr. Caplin: This information is not held centrally. However it will now be collated but may take some time. When I am in a position to do so, I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter the Library of the House.

European Convention on Human Rights

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1123W, when he will write to the hon. Member for Camarthen East and Dinefwr in relation to the extra-territorial applicability of the European Convention on Human Rights. [162684]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Iraq

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* deliberate attacks and *(b)* contact incidents there have been in MND(SE) in Iraq involving UK forces since 17 October 2003; and if he will make a statement. [164910]

Mr. Ingram: Between 17 October 2003 and 28 March 2004 there have been some 67 recorded attacks where firearms or explosives have been used against the United Kingdom Forces in MND(SE). These include some 18 improvised explosive devices, some 41 contact shooting incidents, and some eight other attacks involving mortars, rockets, rocket-propelled grenades or grenades.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to record centrally Iraqi casualties reported by UK forces; and if he will make a statement. [164911]

Mr. Ingram: UK forces who witness an incident in which they are not directly involved provide medical assistance if necessary and endeavour to report it to the appropriate authority. However, it is not always possible to confirm whether or how many casualties have occurred during a particular incident. Consequently there is limited utility in central recording since we have no viable means of assessing the completeness of the information.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what savings will be made by discontinuing the free parcel service for service personnel deployed in Iraq. [165080]

Mr. Ingram: I am not able to quantify precisely the savings, as they depend on force levels and the volumes of mail that families choose to despatch. However, I can say that the cost to the taxpayer of the service since its inception on 17 April 2003 has been between £1.5 million and £2 million. This is in addition to the cost to the Royal Mail Group, who generously provided their services free of charge during the initial three months. I estimate that the cost of providing this service to all personnel on operational deployments would be between £3 million and £9 million per annum. Forces Air Letters ("blueys") and their electronic equivalent, the "e-bluey" will continue to be free of charge. Other airmail items up to 2Kg in weight will be charged at a subsidised rate equivalent to the Royal Mail inland first class tariff.

Joint Force Harrier Study Group

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel, and from which service, were involved in the Joint Force Harrier study group in 2001. [162965]

Mr. Ingram: The Joint Force Harrier Capability Working Group was attended by representatives from all key stakeholder areas in the Ministry of Defence. The numbers attending meetings of the group varied due to individuals' availability. Both the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force were represented.

Mahon Road Base

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on recent personnel changes at Mahon Road army base in Portadown, Northern Ireland. [164940]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently proposals for a re-organisation of Army brigade headquarters in Northern Ireland with a change from three to two operational brigade headquarters. Such a move is a natural progression after the Police Service for Northern Ireland changed from three to two regions last year and would provide a more effective and efficient command structure. This proposal is currently the subject of consultation with the Trade Unions and other interested parties.

If we proceed with this proposal it will mean the disbandment of Headquarters 3 Infantry Brigade which is currently situated in Mahon Road Barracks. Such a re-organisation will not reduce the current level of support which the armed forces provide to the PSNI, indeed the aim is to provide this support more efficiently. Neither will it result in any significant reduction in the number of soldiers or units deployed to Northern Ireland.

Medical Services

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the standard of medical care available to *(a)* service personnel and *(b)* departmental civilian personnel serving in the Vale of York. [165096]

Mr. Caplin: Medical care is provided to Service personnel by the Defence Medical Services to standards at least equal to the National Health Service (NHS). Civilian personnel would receive health service through the local NHS provider.

MOD Properties

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Ministry of Defence properties in the Greater Portsmouth area have been released to *(a)* Annington Homes and *(b)* others in each year since 1996; and what projections he has made for further such releases in each of the next five years. [164619]

Mr. Caplin: Since the 1996 Annington Sale Agreement and up to 31 March 2004, 922 underleased properties with a PO (Portsmouth) postcode have been handed back to Annington Homes Ltd., as follows:

	Number
1997	154
1998	197
1999	21
2000	70
2001	241

	Number
2002	218
2003	20
2004	1

No other disposal of Service Family Accommodation (SFA) has taken place in the area.

Future projections are limited to the next three financial years, and as at 31 March 2004, 273 MOD properties have been identified by the Defence Housing Executive (DHE) in the Portsmouth postcode area for which there is unlikely to be a long-term requirement:

Financial year	Number
2004–05	46
2005–06	47
2006–07	180

The 46 properties in financial year 2004–05 are planned for release to Annington Homes during 2004. Those in other years will be subject to review by the services.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department has realised in capital receipts through the release of Ministry of Defence housing in the Greater Portsmouth area in each year since 1996. [164620]

Mr. Caplin: All the service family housing in the Portsmouth area was purchased by Annington Homes Ltd. (AHL) in 1996. Capital receipts do not accrue to MOD from sales of surplus quarters by AHL, but the Government receives a proportion of the profits under the profit share agreement included in the 1996 sale agreement. Profit share from the sale of the 12,000 properties released through AHL since 1996 has amounted to £96 million. The amounts paid in respect of the Portsmouth releases could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many properties in the Greater Portsmouth area Annington Homes has returned to *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the open market in each year since 1996. [164621]

Mr. Caplin: The information is as follows.

(a) No former service family housing has been returned to MOD by Annington since 1996.

(b) When MOD hands back properties to Annington, it is Annington's decision whether to rent them out, release them onto the open market, or sell them to developers or social housing providers. The Department is not involved in this process and is not in a position to quote figures.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many properties his Department has obtained in the Greater Portsmouth area for housing purposes in each year since 1996; at what cost and from which source; and what targets have been set for further such acquisitions in each of the next five years. [164622]

Mr. Caplin: The Defence Housing Executive's Bristol Bath and Portsmouth PFI project includes 51 houses at Seafield Park, Fareham. Of these, 28 were completed in financial year 2002–03 and 23 in 2003–04. These are the only properties acquired in the Portsmouth area since 1996.

Opinion Sampling

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his estimate is of total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* focus groups and *(b)* opinion polls in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [162762]

Mr. Caplin: The Government want to hear what people have to say about proposed new policies and ideas and are committed to obtaining the best value for money. Public opinion research, including focus groups and polling, is subject to the usual strict rules that spending must represent good value for the taxpayer and must not be used for party political purposes. Research is widely used to inform the development, delivery and evaluation of policy.

Information on the totality of quantitative and qualitative surveys carried out by the Ministry of Defence and its agencies and non-departmental public bodies is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Personnel Numbers

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the average number was of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time staff or equivalent employed in financial year 2002–03 by the (i) Fleet, (ii) General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland), (iii) Field Army (Theatre Troops), (iv) 1 (UK) Armoured Division, (v) 2nd Division, (vi) UK Support Command (Germany), (vii) 3rd Division, (viii) Joint Helicopter Command, (ix) 4th Division, (x) Land Support and (xi) 5th Division management groups; [164662]

(2) what the average number was of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time staff or equivalent employed in financial year 2002–03 by the (i) 1 Group, (ii) 3 Group 2 Group, (iii) Deputy Commander-in-Chief, (iv) British Forces Cyprus, (v) British Forces Gibraltar, (vi) Permanent Joint Headquarters, (vii) Sovereign Base Areas Administration and (viii) British Forces Falkland Islands management groups; [164665]

(3) what the average number was of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time staff or equivalent employed in financial year 2002–03 by the (i) Personnel Management Agency, (ii) Core HQ, (iii) Training Group Defence Agency, (iv) Internal Costs, (v) Programme Account and (vi) Nuclear management groups; [164666]

(4) what the average number was of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time staff or equivalent employed in financial year 2002–03 by the (i) Flag Officer Training and Recruiting, (ii) HQ, (iii) Naval Secretary, (iv) Army Personnel Centre, (v) Adjutant General, (vi) Army Training and Recruiting Agency, (vii) Army Programme, (viii) Service Children's Education and (ix) General Staff management groups; [164663]

(5) what the average number was of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time staff or equivalent employed in financial year 2002–03 by the (i) Defence Fuels Group, (ii) Dep. Chief of Defence Logistics, (iii) Defence Communication Services Agency, (iv) Defence Logistics Support HQ, (v) Defence Clothing and Textiles Agency, (vi) DG Equipment Support (Land), (vii) Warship Support Agency, (viii) DG Equipment Support (Air), (ix) Defence Storage and Distribution Agency, (x) Director Land Service Ammunition, (xi) Defence Transport and Movements Agency and (xii) British Forces Post Office management groups; [164664]

(6) what the average number was of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time staff or equivalent employed in financial year 2002–03 by the (i) Personnel Director, (ii) War Pensions Agency, (iii) Pay and Personnel Agency, (iv) Surgeon General, (v) Defence Vetting Agency, (vi) Dep. Chief Defence Staff (Personnel), (vii) Defence Export Services Organisation, (viii) Defence Secondary Care Agency, (ix) Finance Director, (x) Defence Dental Agency, (xi) Defence Analytical Services Agency, (xii) Defence Housing Executive, (xiii) Defence Bills Agency, (xiv) Defence Medical Training Org, (xv) Chief Constable MOD Police, (xvi) Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency, (xvii) Chief Scientific Adviser, (xviii) Defence Estates, (xix) Policy Director, (xx) Deputy Chief Defence Staff (Commitments), (xxi) Deputy Chief Defence Staff (Equipment Capability), (xxii) Director Special Forces, (xxiii) Chief of Defence Intelligence, (xxiv) Defence Geographic and Imaging Intelligence Agency and (xxv) Defence Intelligence and Security Centre management groups. [164667]

Mr. Caplin: There has been a delay in providing this statistical information. I hope to be able to respond in detail soon and I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Public Private Partnerships (Specialist Reviews)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is his policy to require *(a)* the public sector comparator and *(b)* other commercial bids to undertake a public private partnership, to be subject to an independent specialist review to test their manpower and financial assumptions. [162672]

Mr. Ingram: All major spending projects including all Public Private Partnerships are subject to independent review by the Ministry of Defence scrutineers supporting the Department's Investment Approvals Board. In some cases Her Majesty's Treasury will also scrutinise bids. Certain commercial bids are referred to external advisers for specialist advice.

Royal Irish Regiment (3rd Battalion)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans there are for the Third Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment to be *(a)* disbanded and *(b)* incorporated into other battalions; and whether it will remain fully operational after April 2005. [164951]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to my response to her question which I answered on 23 June 2003, *Official Report*, column 544W.

Works Projects

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the proposed highway works in Northumberland, pursuant to project 4374. [163968]

Mr. Caplin: The highway works are on the A696 (T) and are in support of the infrastructure developments at the Otterburn Training Area to accommodate live firing of AS90 and multiple launch rocket system.

The works include nine traffic lay-by holding areas for use during the management of convoy movements. The works were undertaken on behalf of the MOD by the Highways Agency and are virtually complete.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Carbon Monoxide

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to ensure that householders *(a)* obtain and *(b)* use certified carbon monoxide detectors. [163386]

Mr. Browne: Carbon monoxide alarms conforming to the relevant British Standards are a useful back-up precaution for householders, but should not be regarded as a substitute for proper installation and maintenance of gas equipment by a competent installer registered with Council for Registered Gas Installers (CORGI).

In the meantime recommendation of CO alarms as a secondary line of defence has been included in the latest HSE guidance on gas safety and HSE is co-operating with industry on research to resolve questions around long-term reliability.

Gas Appliance Safety

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what discussions he has had with gas suppliers on *(a)* the need for regular gas checks and *(b)* the efficient operations of gas appliances in the domestic setting; [163389]

(2) if he will convene a meeting at the earliest opportunity with the gas supply industry, the Health and Safety Executive and other relevant agencies to plan a national campaign to address the dangers of carbon monoxide poison from domestic gas appliances. [163392]

Mr. Browne: Officials from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have already met with representatives from the gas supply industry, who are currently developing a strategy for future national gas safety awareness campaigns. The industry players have committed to produce an agreed strategy for implementation in time for autumn 2004.

This is in addition to existing measures to promote awareness of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. These measures include the annual winter gas safety awareness campaign overseen by HSE, which this year targeted particularly vulnerable groups, such as students and other first-time renters, elderly people and parents of young children.

HSE's domestic gas safety website contains information on the causes and symptoms of CO, and what to do if poisoning is suspected. HSE produces free leaflets on gas safety both for general consumers and landlords, including information on CO, in 12 community languages as well as English.

It also operates a Gas Safety Advice line providing free advice to callers. Additionally, where possible, HSE officials participate from time to time in awareness-raising events run by other organisations, such as local community groups.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will introduce a statutory requirement for all homes to have their gas appliances checked on a regular basis. [163390]

Mr. Browne: Residential landlords are already required by law at all times to maintain, in a safe condition, the gas appliances in their rental properties, and to carry out a gas safety check on an annual basis. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) also strongly recommends that owner-occupiers put in place a regular servicing and maintenance routine for their gas appliances. However, when the question of introducing mandatory safety checks was examined by the Health and Safety Commission in 2000, the Commission concluded that such an approach would be difficult to justify on both cost and practicality grounds. The recommendation of their Review was that efforts should instead be focused on further publicity and guidance in order to raise awareness of the need for all gas appliances to be regularly checked for safety and services in accordance with manufacturers' instructions. I fully support this position.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many prosecutions there have been in each of the last 10 years of landlords whose neglect of gas appliances caused the death of their tenants. [163391]

Mr. Andrew Smith: The information is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is in the following table.

The number of prosecutions of landlords instituted by HSE, following a death: 1996–97 to 2002–03

	Number of cases	*Number of information laid*
1997–98	5	14
1998–99	3	22
1999–2000	5	6
2000–01	3	25
2001–02	1	24
2002–03 (provisional figures)	0	0

Source:
Health and Safety Executive, Safety and Enforcement Statistics.

Each case relates to an individual landlord against whom one or more informations may have been laid; for example, a landlord may be prosecuted for failure to maintain gas appliances at a number of different properties

Workplace Safety

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many workplace transport *(a)* deaths and *(b)* accidents there were in each year since 1997. [165183]

Angela Smith: The information in the table gives the numbers of injuries involving workplace transport in all industries except for mines, railways and offshore where the types of transport are very specific to those industries. The injury figures are those relating to an absence of more than three days from work.

The definition of workplace transport in the table includes people: being struck by a vehicle; falling from a vehicle; being hit by materials falling from a vehicle and injured in a collapse/overturn of a vehicle.

The numbers of workplace transport injuries available at this level of detail are readily available from 1998–99 onwards. They include accidents to employees, to the self-employed and members of the public killed and injured by workplace transport. These figures exclude work related Road Traffic Accidents.

The number of injuries involving workplace transport, as reported to HSE and local authorities, 1998–99 to 2002–03

	Fatal injuries	*Non fatal injuries*
1998–99	67	7,590
1999–2000	54	8,075
2000–01	95	7,597
2001–02	53	5,224
2002–03 (provisional)	57	5,107
Total	326	33,593

Amanda Bufferey

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will intervene to ensure the Child Support Agency (CSA) deal immediately with the case of Amanda Bufferey, CSA reference 326728861475. [164593]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Michael Foster, dated 1 April 2004:

In replying to your recent Parliament question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will intervene to ensure the Child Support Agency (CSA) deal immediately with the case of Amanda Buffery, CSA reference 326728861475.

As individual cases are confidential, I have written to you today about Ms Buffery's case.

Benefit Payments

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* new and *(b)* existing benefit payments have been transferred to (i) bank accounts and (ii) Post Office Card Accounts in 2003,

broken down by region; and what percentage of (A) new and (B) transferred benefit payments this represents in each case. [160218]

Mr. Pond: The number and percentage of new benefit payments, broken down by region, then bank or building society and Post Office Card Account methods of payment is shown in the following table:

Government Office Region	*Number of payments paid into a Bank or Building Society Account*	*Percentage of payments paid into a Banker Building Society Account*	*Number of payments paid into Post Office Card Account*	*Percentage of payments paid into a Post Office Card Account*
North East	14,145	55.98	730	2.89
North West	35,275	58.23	1,425	2.35
Yorkshire and Humberside	25,595	60.57	1,010	2.39
East Midlands	20,580	64.91	750	2.37
West Midlands	28,405	63.09	1,115	2.48
East of England	26,510	69.53	640	1.68
London	30,870	62.57	1,045	2.12
South East	34,230	70.62	730	1.51
South West	22,570	65.97	670	1.96
Wales	16,170	56.96	680	2.40
Scotland	27,220	56.79	1,110	2.32
Total	281,570	62.39	9,905	2.19

The number and percentage of transferred benefit payments, broken down by region, then bank or building society and Post Office Card Account methods of payment (of the new payment):

Government Office Region	*Number of payments paid into a Bank or Building Society Account*	*Percentage of payments paid into a Bank or Building Society Account*	*Number of payments paid into Post Office Card Accounts*	*Percentage of payments paid into a Post Office Card Account*
North East	20,850	60.06	11,390	32.81
North West	45,625	63.25	20,070	27.82
Yorkshire and Humberside	31,885	64.15	14,340	28.85
East Midlands	25,655	66.87	10,565	27.54
West Midlands	32,030	64.48	14,425	29.04
East of England	25,780	70.44	8,475	23.16
London	31,045	69.57	8,840	19.81
South East	33,660	72.84	9,415	20.37
South West	22,400	65.73	9,195	26.98
Wales	19,195	66.57	6,605	22.91
Scotland	32,415	65.48	12,950	26.16
Total	320,540	66.17	126,270	26.07

Notes:

1. Figures produced by comparing two snapshots of live accounts in payment at 27 December 2003 and 24 January 2004.
2. Figures refer to accounts not claimants. Therefore, if a benefit recipient was in receipt of two benefits via different accounts, these would both be included in these figures, but if a claimant received multiple benefits through one account then this would only be counted once.
3. Figures refer to GB benefit recipients only.
4. Figures have been rounded to the nearest five.
5. Some payments made into Bank and Building Society accounts allow access to cash, at Post Office branches.

The statistics represent accounts paid by each method of payment. As many customers have already provided their account details it is expected that the figures for Direct Payment into bank or building society accounts and Post Office Card Accounts will quickly rise, as customers existing methods of payment expire, and they move over to payment being made direct into their nominated account.

The statistical information detailed in this response has been obtained from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Information Centre, Information and Analysis Directorate.

Child Support Agency

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) on what date the Child Support Agency EDS (Plain Version) Plan will be available; [160356]

(2) what progress has been made in resolving the failings of the new Child Support Agency computer systems; and what timescale has been set for the problems to be resolved. [160360]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Mike Isaac to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 1 April 2004:

In replying to your recent Parliamentary questions about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. As he is currently on leave I am replying on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on what date the Child Support Agency EDS (Plain Version) Plan will be available and what progress has been made in resolving the failings of the new computer systems; and what timescale has been set for the problems to be resolved.

We now have a plan from EDS in plain English. We are using that as a basis for establishing our own plans covering exactly what needs to be done and by when.

It is not yet possible to provide a definitive timescale within which all known problems with the computer and telephony service will be resolved. I will continue to monitor this carefully and make regular reports to the Secretary of State on progress. As you are aware, reports have been made available in the House of Commons Library on 16 July, 18 November 2003 and 12 February 2004.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the current timescale is for a manual payment to be made to a parent with care once the Child Support Agency has identified that the case is a new system failure; and how much money has been received from non-resident parents and not yet paid to parents with care under the new system. [160359]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 1 April 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the current timescale is for a manual payment to be made to a parent with care once the Child Support Agency has identified that the case is a new system failure; and how much money has been received from non-resident parents and not yet paid to parents with care under the new system.

As at 31 January we had received maintenance payments on the new computer system totalling £18.9 million, in addition to this amount we received £7.1 million that was due to be paid to the Secretary of State. For the same period we made payments to parents with care totalling £18.5 million. At any point in time we will be holding receipts, which are awaiting assignment to a parent with care's account. As at 31 January, £368,868 was awaiting assignment to parents with care whose cases are on the new computer system.

When we identify that the computer cannot make a payment automatically, the case is referred to a specialist team. The average delay in making a manual payment is 10 working days; we are currently issuing around 150 payments each week.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many incidents of non-payment of money received from the non-resident parent to the parent with care owing to software failure there have been under the new Child Support Agency system for *(a)* new straightforward cases and *(b)* migrated cases. [160361]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 1 April 2004:

In replying to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many incidents of non-payment of money received from the non-resident parent to the parent with care owing to software failure there have been under the new system for *(a)* new straightforward cases and *(b)* migrated cases.

The information that you seek is unavailable. However I can tell you that between August 2003 and February 2004 the new computer system generated over 346,000 payments to a parent with care representing moneys paid to us by the non-resident parent. In the same period just over 1,700 payments were issued manually.

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the planned date is by which all Child Support Agency maintenance assessments calculated under the old system will have been transferred to the new system. [160743]

Mr. Pond: I refer the hon. Member to the Written Answer I gave the hon. Member for Castle Point (Bob Spink) on 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1092W.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what performance measures are in place for Child Support Agency caseworkers in English regions; what the most recent performance delivery against these measures was; and how many caseworkers in Yorkshire have been disciplined for poor service provision in the last three years. [162156]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Mike Isaac to Mr. John Trickett, dated 1 April 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. As he is currently on leave I am replying on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what performance measures are in place for Child Support Agency caseworkers in English regions; what the most recent performance delivery against these measures was; and how many caseworkers in Yorkshire have been disciplined for poor service provision in the last three years.

The Agency adopts a consistent set of performance measures across Great Britain. These are set out and published in the Agency's Business Plan. The plan for 2003/04 was placed in the library of the House of Commons on 29 April 2003. Reports on Agency performance during the course of the current year have also been placed in the library of the House of Commons on 16 July, 18 November 2003 and 12 February 2004. Information with regard to the number of caseworkers in Yorkshire that have been disciplined for poor service provision is not routinely collected and is therefore unavailable.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list each of his Department's performance targets for the *(a)* old and *(b)* new Child Support Agency scheme; and what the latest performance against each of those targets is. [162681]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Steve Webb, dated 1 April 2004:

In replying to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list each of his Department's performance targets for the *(a)* old and *(b)* Child Support Agency scheme; and what the latest performance against each of those targets is.

The performance targets for 2003/04 are set out and published in the Agency's Business Plan for that year. This was placed in the Library of the House of Commons on 29 April 2003. I have attached a copy of this section of the plan.

The Secretary of State issued a Written Statement on progress in the new scheme performance on 12 February 2004. A report of the Agency's performance for the year 2003/04 will be included in the Annual Report and Accounts, which will be published in June.

Child Support Agency: Performance against targets as at February 2004

		Percentage
	Target	*Agency*
Secretary of State Targets—Old Scheme The overall proportion of cases to achieve Full Maintenance Assessment to be 33 per cent. on old scheme cases.	33.0	22.6
Secretary of State Targets—New Scheme The overall proportion of cases to achieve Full Maintenance Assessment to be 53 per cent. on new scheme cases.	53.0	60
The accuracy on the last decision for all assessments checked in the year to be correct to the nearest penny in at least 90 per cent. of cases.	90.0	86.4
Case Compliance	78	Not known
Cash Compliance	75	Not known
Throughput of cases from application to payment arrangement	6 weeks	Not known

Throughput and Case and Cash Compliance

Issues with the new computer's management information systems, mean that we are unable to provide reliable performance figures at present. We are working to resolve the problems and expect to have a solution shortly.

Customer Perception

The aim of this target is to focus on how the service provided by the Agency is perceived by those who use it. A qualitative study has been commissioned to look at the experiences and views of new customers whose only involvement will have been with the new scheme. The results of this will be used to establish a baseline from which a customer perception target will be developed. The Agency is now committed to publishing a milestone target in the Business Plan for 2004/05 leading to a published target in 2005/06.

Unit Cost/Productivity

The Agency published an internal unit cost target in the 2003–04 business plan. This target was based on Agency staff cost and the number of cases on the live load. The target for 2003–04 was £184 per case. Our performance in the year to date is within £10 of the target figure.

Debt

Our target is to introduce an internal target for this year and a Secretary of State target for 2004/05. Work continues on the development of the format of the Secretary of State target for 2004/05.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the percentage of Child Support Agency cases that are active on the *(a)* old and *(b)* new system; and if he will estimate what the percentages for each of the next 10 years would be if the new child support system continues to take on only new and linked cases. [164048]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Webb, dated 1 April 2004:

In replying to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of state promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will estimate the percentage of Child Support Agency cases that are active on the *(a)* old and *(b)* new system; and if he will estimate what the percentages for each of the next 10 years would be if the new child support system continues to take on only new and linked cases.

At 31 December the Agency held over £1 million cases within its systems. At that date 24% of active cases were held on the new computer system and 76% of active cases were held on the old system. I am unable to estimate what the percentages are for the next 10 years, nevertheless if the current rate of transfer continues I estimate that by 30 September the balance will be around 33% on the new system and around 67% on the old.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether reassessments of pre-2003 Child Support Agency clients transferred to the post-2003 assessment system will apply retrospectively. [164266]

Mr. Pond: No. Old scheme cases will transfer to the new scheme on a date which has yet to be decided. We will make a decision once we are sure the new arrangements are working well. Some cases have converted early where they are linked to a new scheme case.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects to know when the existing child support cases on the old system of assessment will be transferred to the new system of assessment. [165230]

Mr. Pond: The Child Support Agency now has a recovery plan from EDS (the IT supplier). The agency will use that IT recovery plan as a basis for establishing how this meets the needs of the business.

It is not yet possible to provide a time scale for when cases on the old scheme will be transferred to the new one.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claims for child maintenance have not been paid in each of the last five years owing to the Child Support Agency being unable to find the correct address of the absentee parent. [161378]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Simon Thomas, dated 1 April 2004:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claims of child maintenance have not been paid in each of the last five years owing to the Child Support Agency being unable to find the correct address of the absentee parent.

I'm sorry that this information is not available. It is not information that we have been routinely required to collect.

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what system is being used to decide the order of priority whereby old rules child support cases are transferred to the new rules. [164890]

Mr. Pond: I refer my hon. Friend to the Written Answer I gave the hon. Member for Dartford (Dr. Stoate) on 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 341W.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150258]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security (DSS) and Employment Service (ES).

Information on the number of staff in DWP at 31 January 2004, as in DSS at 1 January 1997, broken down by grade, is in the table. Information by grade in 1997 is not available for ES. However, the total number of staff employed by ES at 1 April 1997 was 34,174.

	1 January 2004 (Department for Work and Pensions)	*31 January 1997 (Department of Social Security)*
SCS	228	108
Grade 6	445	406
Grade 7	1,197	671
SEO	2,707	1,148
HEO	7,982	4,501
EO	41,514	23,864
AO	60,922	49,502
AA	10,056	13,992
Others	—	159
Total	125,051	94,351

Notes:
Staff numbers are Whole-time Equivalent (WTE) rounded and are consistent with
Cabinet Office definitions other than the inclusion of staff on paid maternity leave.
Source:
Departmental personnel records.

Construction Industry

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measures his Department has taken to promote Local Labour in Construction in the *(a)* public and *(b)* private sector; and if he will make a statement. [164887]

Maria Eagle: This Department is promoting local labour in construction through Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESAs) and more specifically our Ambition: Construction pilots.

Since October 2002 each English region has had in place its Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESAs). FRESAs aim to maintain and improve regional labour markets by co-ordinating strategy for employment and skills in each region, and ensuring a more efficient and co-ordinated service for employers and individuals alike. The Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were asked to lead in the development of FRESAs by DWP, with DfES and DTI. The strategic partners taking forward FRESAs include Government Offices, Jobcentre Plus, the CBI, the TUC, the Learning and Skills Council and local authorities.

Ambition is unique among UK welfare-to-work programmes in terms of the degree to which employers are involved in design and delivery. By meeting the precise entry requirements of employers, Ambition can open up well-paid jobs with career potential to unemployed and disadvantaged jobseekers, while at the same time offering a high-quality recruitment service to employers and helping them to address skill shortages.

Ambition pilots are working with employers at central and local levels. Centrally, a steering group of business leaders from the construction sector oversees the project and reports progress to Ministers. Locally, Jobcentre Plus and contracted training providers engage local employers in the design of the programme and work with them to identify and meet their recruitment needs.

Ambition: Construction pilots are operating in seven locations: Paddington, Nottingham, Leeds, Coventry, Manchester, Merseyside and Aberdeen, with two further pilots in Edinburgh, and the Forth Valley starting in April 2004.

Correspondence

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will answer question reference 148968, tabled by the hon. Member for Northavon on 15 January 2004. [161623]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 23 March 2004]:* An answer was given to the hon. Member today.

Department-Sponsored Programmes

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what funding has been allocated to *(a)* action teams for jobs, *(b)* employment zones, *(c)* neighbourhood nurseries, *(d)* StepUp and *(e)* Sure Start in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06 and (iii) total. [163721]

Mr. Andrew Smith: The information is in the following table.

Programme funding

£ million

Programme	*Total to 2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]	*2005–06*[1]
Action Teams for Jobs	[1]181.5	58	58
Employment Zones	[2]336.5	92	[4]101
Neighbourhood Nurseries	[2]104	95	54
StepUp	[2]19.6	10	1
Sure Start[3]	[2]752	463	507

[1] Allocation figures including Employment and Transport Projects Funds.
[2] Includes spend to date and forecast outturn for 2003–04.
[3] Figures for the 500 plus Sure Start Local Programmes across England.
[4] Anticipated allocation.
Source:
DfES Sure Start Unit, Jobcentre Plus Finance and DWP Programme Divisions.

Departmental Buildings/Contracts

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what *(a)* renovation and *(b)* maintenance projects on buildings (i) owned and (ii) rented by his Department were undertaken in each of the last five years; and what the associated costs were of each. [163944]

Maria Eagle: This department occupies approximately 1,800 buildings. The information in the format requested is not available centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Ethnic Minority Outreach

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the value is of the contracts awarded to *(a)* At Work (Talent) North London and *(b)* Reed in Partnership in North London in connection with the Ethnic Minority Outreach Programme; what targets were agreed when the contracts were awarded; and how many people (i) have been helped into work and (ii) have achieved other job outcomes as a result of those contracts, broken down by ethnic background. [162311]

Maria Eagle: The Ethnic Minority Outreach service, launched in April 2002, was introduced to engage with jobless ethnic minority people who were not regular users of Jobcentre Plus services, and help them compete more effectively in the labour market.

Targets were agreed with providers for a range of outcomes including job entries and work related training. Contracts and targets vary according to the particular barriers faced by the local ethnic minority community and the type of provision supplied.

At Work (Talent) North London and Reed in Partnership North London have been awarded contracts to the value of £240,970 and £294,850 respectively to deliver Ethnic Minority Outreach provision over the period April 2002 to March 2004.

Information on numbers helped into work through the Ethnic Minority Outreach service provided by At Work (Talent) North London and Reed in Partnership in North London, broken down by ethnic background, is in the table.

Job entries through Ethnic Minority Outreach provision[1]

Ethnic background	*At Work (Talent) North London*	*Reed in Partnership North London*
Not disclosed	>5	12
British	>5	>5
Irish	>5	>5
Other White	18	>5
White and Black Caribbean	6	>5
White and Black African	9	>5
White and Asian	>5	>5
Other Mixed	>5	>5
Indian	8	>5
Pakistani	10	>5
Bangladeshi	7	>5
Other Asian	7	>5
Black Caribbean	38	39
Black African	52	102
Other Black	10	5
Chinese	>5	>5
Other ethnic group	>5	>5
Total	181	169

[1] All information is to the end of February 2004. Where >5 is indicated, less than five customers from these backgrounds gained jobs. The exact figure is not given to preserve customer anonymity. Job entries through Ethnic Minority Outreach.

Source:
Department for Work and Pensions.

Minority Ethnic Outreach targets for At Work (Talent) North London and Reed in Partnership in North London are in the table.

Target	*At Work (Talent) North London*	*Reed in Partnership North London*
Registration with Jobcentre Plus	160	155
Starts on New Deal	160	60
Completion of New Deal	120	40
Job Outcomes	291	140
Registration with Talent Intermediary Service	800	Not applicable
Engagement with employers to promote the benefits of diversity	182	Not applicable

Source:
Department for Work and Pensions

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action he is taking to increase the number of ethnic minority employees within his Department. [163552]

Maria Eagle: The latest figures for February 2004 show that the Department now employs 7.5 per cent. staff from an ethnic minority against the figure of 6.8 per cent. for the UK's economically active population.

Several initiatives are in place to help us to increase further the proportion of our staff from ethnic backgrounds, these include a new recruitment system introduced in December 2002 which is designed to be inclusive, increasing external recruitment into the Senior Civil Service to give us benefits from a wider range of candidates, development of a checklist of recruitment best practice which will enable recruitment at all grades from the widest possible pool, and a pilot of new methods of recruitment to our non-departmental public bodies. This will be based on outreach, marketing and support for applicants.

Departmental Expenditure (Sittingbourne and Sheppey)

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the expenditure of his Department and its predecessors for the constituency of Sittingbourne and Sheppey was between *(a)* 1992 and 1997, *(b)* 1997 and 2001 and *(c)* 2001 and 2004. [159489]

Mr. Browne: This information is not currently available in the form requested and could not be assembled without incurring disproportionate cost.

Departmental Policies (Older People)

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for what *(a)* initiatives, *(b)* campaigns and *(c)* advisory bodies relating to older people his Department (i) is responsible and (ii) has provided funding since 2001; and what the cost in each year was for each one. [165142]

Malcolm Wicks: The information has been placed in the Library.

Direct Payments

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were eligible for direct payments in Scotland in *(a)* 2000–01, *(b)* 2001–02 and *(c)* 2002–03, broken down by local authority area. [161755]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the format requested. The information in the table gives the number of benefit and pension accounts paid by Direct Payment in December 2002 and December 2003. The number of accounts paid by Direct Payment in each Scottish local authority is shown as a percentage of the overall total of accounts paid by Direct Payment in Scotland.

	December 2002		*December 2003*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Total benefit or Pension accounts in Scotland paid by Direct Payment	923,120	100	1,296,750	100
Aberdeen City	39,120	4.24	51,155	3.94
Aberdeenshire	43,120	4.67	58,705	4.53
Angus	22,790	2.47	30,975	2.39
Argyll and Bute	18,980	2.06	24,675	1.90
The Scottish Borders	22,835	2.47	30,600	2.36
Clackmannanshire	8,945	0.97	12,835	0.99
West Dumbartonshire	14,960	1.62	23,800	1.84
Dumfries and Galloway	30,640	3.32	41,865	3.23
Dundee City	25,055	2.71	35,340	2.73
East Ayrshire	21,045	2.28	30,670	2.37
East Dumbartonshire	24,680	2.67	31,325	2.42
East Lothian	18,575	2.01	24,610	1.90
East Renfrewshire	20,695	2.24	26,245	2.02
City of Edinburgh	82,750	8.96	104,860	8.09
Falkirk	25,830	2.80	36,595	2.82
Fife	65,440	7.09	92,960	7.17
Glasgow City	79,600	8.62	133,390	10.29
Highland	43,470	4.71	59,210	4.57
Inverclyde	13,865	1.50	20,605	1.59
Midlothian	15,400	1.67	21,435	1.65
Moray	16,560	1.79	22,630	1.75
North Ayrshire	24,970	2.70	36,470	2.81
North Lanarkshire	46,805	5.07	74,440	5.74
Orkney Islands	3,695	0.40	5,060	0.39
Perth and Kinross	30,350	3.29	38,810	2.99
Renfrewshire	31,760	3.44	44,030	3.40
Shetland Isles	3,905	0.42	5,380	0.41
South Ayrshire	24,445	2.65	32,400	2.50
South Lanarkshire	54,315	5.88	77,715	5.99
Stirling	17,165	1.86	22,180	1.71
West Lothian	27,030	2.93	39,380	3.04
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	4,330	0.47	6,405	0.49

Notes:
1. Figures refer to a snapshot of live accounts in payment on 24 January 2004 and 25 January 2003.
2. The people eligible for Direct Payment are those who have an account suitable for receiving direct payment and who have an agreement with the Secretary of State that they want their benefit or pension made by this method. The figures above are of those people who have taken up the option of receiving their benefit or pension this way.
3. The figures relate to payments administered by Department of Work and Pensions only. They do not include Child Benefit accounts which are the responsibility of Inland Revenue or War Pension accounts are now the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence
4. The figures above are rounded to the nearest five, totals may not sum due to roundings

Source:
DWP Information Centre, Information and Analysis Directorate (100 per cent. data).

E-business Strategy

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects to produce his Department's e-business strategy. [162815]

Mr. Browne: Making services available online is an intrinsic part of DWP's business strategy, not a free-standing activity. It is therefore no longer appropriate to publish a separate e- business strategy. Details of DWP's approach to customer service delivery can be found in the business plans of each of the main delivery businesses, copies of which are on the Department's websites and in the Library.

Employment Agencies

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the employment agencies which his Department and its predecessors have used to supply temporary staff in each financial year since 1996–97 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [163816]

Maria Eagle: The Department's use of agencies to supply temporary staff is limited, temporary vacancies are normally notified to, and filled by, Jobcentre Plus Offices. The information requested is not held centrally and where available would only go back to 2001/02, due to the length of time the Department is required to keep recruitment information. Obtaining any information would be at disproportionate cost.

Endometriosis

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how much *(a)* Disability Living Allowance and *(b)* (i) short-term and (ii) long-term Incapacity Benefit was paid out in England and Wales as a result of (A) chronic pelvic pain and (B) endometriosis in each year since 2000–01, broken down by region; [163135]

(2) how many individuals in England and Wales were receiving Disability Living Allowance as a result of endometriosis in each year since 2000–01, broken down by region. [163136]

Maria Eagle: There is no data available to answer the question *(a)* on Disability Living Allowance nor the question on Disability Allowance contained in PQ 163136. The items on Incapacity Benefit for which answers can be provided are contained in the table.

Great Britain

£ million

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Incapacity Benefit short-term			
Endometriosis	0.1	0.4	0.1
Abdominal and Pelvic Pain	3	3	3
Incapacity Benefit long-term			
Endometriosis	2	2	2
Abdominal and pelvic pain			
North East	1	1	1
North West	2	2	2
Yorkshire and Number	2	2	2
East Midlands	1	1	1
West Midlands	2	2	2

Great Britain

£ million

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
East	1	1	1
London	1	1	1
South East	1	1	1
South West	1	1	1
Total England	11	12	12
Wales	2	2	2
Scotland	3	3	3
Great Britain	16	17	18

Numbers are based on a 5 per cent. sample of administrative records, drawn quarterly from the Incapacity Benefit computer system, and averaged over each financial year.

Expenditure figures have been rounded to the nearest million and may not sum to the total as a result. The exception to this is contained in the Table showing Incapacity Short Term expenditure on Endometriosis, which is rounded to the nearest one hundred thousand.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of the Incapacity Benefit caseload have been in continuous receipt of the benefit since before 1 May 1997. [163693]

Maria Eagle: The total number of IB and SDA claimants at 30 November 2003 is 2,720,500. Of these, 1,129,200 or 41.5 per cent. have a claim start date before 1 May 1997.

- Before 1997, people claiming Incapacity Benefits received virtually no support to get back to work despite the fact that large numbers want to work again. That is why, since 1997, we have sought to provide greater incentives to try out work, and to offer specialist support to put individuals in a better position to secure a job.

Our Pathways to Work pilots bring all existing and new measures together in a more coherent package of choices. On 17 March, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced further incentives to be trialled in pilot areas to enable those preparing for a return to work to receive an additional £20 per week for up to 26 weeks.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and the percentage is rounded to one place of decimal.

2. Some cases, which have been "rebuilt" onto the system, may have a start date later than the original commencement date of the spell.

3. Cases where payment has been temporarily suspended for a period within the spell, cannot be identified.

Source:

DWP—IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average length of time was for which *(a)* a man and *(b)* a woman has received Incapacity Benefit on mental health grounds in each year since 1997 in relation to (i) stress, (ii) behavioural problems, (iii) anxiety and (iv) depression. [164731]

Maria Eagle: The information has been placed in the Library.

Jobcentre Plus

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his plans are for Jobcentre Plus for over 50s; and how much his Department has committed to the programme. [163016]

Mr. Browne: Our Pensions Green Paper 'Simplicity, Security and Choice: Working and Saving for Retirement' reinforced our commitment to extend employment opportunities for older people, with a range of proposals including providing extra back to work help for the over 50s and a number of changes to tax and pension rules which will give individuals more choice and the opportunity to stay in work longer. We have also pledged to tackle age discrimination in the workplace and will be introducing age legislation and guidance covering employment and vocational training by October 2006.

Through Jobcentre Plus we have enhanced the New Deal 50plus programme to offer customers a package of help tailored to individual needs. This includes personal job-search advice, pre-work training, work trials, volunteering opportunities and an in-work training grant. This help is available to all people aged 50 and over (and their dependent partners aged 50 and over) who have been on specified benefits such as Jobseekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit and Pension Credit for six months or more.

The projected expenditure for New Deal 50plus in 2003–04 is £56 million. Back to work help is also available to people aged 50 or over through other programmes, for example New Deal 25plus and Work Based Learning for Adults. The cost of this help is not available separately of wider programme budgets. Additionally, we have allocated £7.9 million in 2004–05 and £7.2 million in 2005–06 to fund new measures to assist people aged 50 and over back to work (as announced in the pre-Budget report) and a campaign to encourage employers to recruit and retain older workers (as announced in the 2004 Budget).

From April 2004 we will be piloting two of the back to work help proposals outlined in the Green Paper. The Over 50s Outreach pilot involves external organisations acting as an intermediary between Jobcentre Plus and the customer. Research has indicated that contact from Jobcentre Plus can concern people aged over 50, particularly those on inactive benefits such as Incapacity Benefit, Income Support and Severe Disablement Allowance. This project is aimed at identifying best practice to help Jobcentre Plus better engage with these customers.

We are also running a pilot study giving customers aged 50 to 59, who have been claiming JSA for 18 months, mandatory Intensive Activity Periods as part of their ND25plus programme. Customers aged 25 to 49 are already required to participate in this element of the ND25plus programme because it offers them extensive help back into work. Eligible customers aged 50 to 59 currently have voluntary access to this provision but only 12 per cent. take up the opportunity. Research suggests that this lack of take up may be due to

individuals losing confidence and becoming demoralised about their chances of returning to work. We believe that participation in the Intensive Activity Periods is a key element in re-motivating people aged 50 to 59 years old and giving them the relevant support and employment opportunities they need.

In addition to this, the IB Reform pilots are looking at how we can best provide the support needed to help new incapacity benefit customers return to work. Given the positive start to the pilots, and the fact that many of those existing customers volunteering to take part have been successfully helped back into jobs, a tailored regime will be introduced early in 2005 for all existing IB customers who started their claim in the two years prior to the beginning of the IB Reform Pilots.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether Jobcentre Plus advisers receive additional payments for keeping clients with disabilities in work; and if he will make a statement. [163697]

Mr. Browne: Jobcentre Plus advisers, in common with other DWP staff, receive a basic salary and have the opportunity to earn a performance-related bonus on top. In the 2003 pay award those bonuses were up to £220 for Band C staff in Jobcentre Plus, which included personal advisers. The amount of bonus was determined by the "box marking" an individual received in their annual appraisal, which depended on achievement of their objectives. These objectives would have covered the full range of their duties.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will list the functions *(a)* of job centres and *(b)* of Jobcentre Plus centres; [162212]

(2) if he will list the functions *(a)* of job centres and *(b)* of Jobcentre Plus centres in (i) Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and (ii) Ayrshire and Bute, showing for each at the last date for which information is available (A) the number of jobseeker's allowance customers registered at each, (B) the number of income support and incapacity benefit customers registered at each, (C) the number of customers at each in the specialist disability adviser's caseload and (D) the number of customers expected to be seen for incapacity benefit once the new regulations take effect. [162215]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 18 March 2004]:* The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Andrew Turner, dated 1 April 2004:

As Jobcentre Plus is an Executive Agency, the Secretary of State has asked me to reply direct to your question about the functions of Jobcentres and Jobcentre Plus centres generally and in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and Ayrshire and Bute in particular. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of the Agency.

Jobcentre Plus came into existence as a national organisation at the beginning of April 2002 and the roll-out of its new services will be completed by 2006. The Benefits Agency and Employment Service ceased to exist at the same time. Some 400 Jobcentre Plus offices are now delivering the new integrated service across the country.

In broad terms, Jobcentres, formerly operated by the Employment Service, have traditionally provided the following services:

1. taking new claims to Jobseeker's Allowance;
2. providing support for jobseekers through New Deal;
3. providing access to job vacancies through touch-screen Jobpoints
4. Fortnightly Jobsearch Reviews and adviser interventions, supporting jobsearch and checking entitlement to benefit;
5. providing advice and guidance services in the community through outreach and building local partnerships; and
6. signposting to other Government services.

Social security offices, formerly operated by the Benefits Agency, have traditionally provided the following services:

1. receiving and processing claims for a wide range of benefits;
2. managing applications to the Social Fund;
3. providing advice and information on benefits and allowances;
4. investigating cases of suspected fraud, taking action where appropriate; and
5. signposting to other Government services.

The new Jobcentre Plus offices deliver an integrated service incorporating those functions previously delivered through Jobcentres and social security offices. New technology and a growing contact centre network, support the delivery of this new service. As Jobcentre Plus offices are introduced across the country people of working age will have one local contact point for benefits and job vacancies.

With Jobcentre Plus roll-out spread over four years, local managers have had some flexibility to begin the integration of local services ahead of the full implementation. In some locations this might take the form of social security experts providing benefit advice in Jobcentres and, conversely, provision of some access to job vacancies in social security offices. Where we have done this it has improved access to local services, but at the same time it has blurred the distinction between Jobcentres and social security offices.

The new Jobcentre Plus service is currently being rolled out in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Ayrshire is currently scheduled to roll-out the new service in 2005–06 and Bute has been delivering the new service since 17 March 2003.

You asked for specific information on; *(a)* the number of Jobseeker's Allowance customers registered at each; *(b)* the number of Income Support and Incapacity Benefit customers registered at each; *(c)* the number of customers at each in the specialist Disability Adviser's caseload; and *(d)* the number of customers expected to be seen for Incapacity Benefit once the new regulations take effect. Current information up to the end of February can be found in the following tables.

Ayrshire and Bute

Office	*Number of JSA Customers Registered*	*Number of IS and IB Customers Registered*	*Number of Disability Employment Advisors Caseload Customers*	*Number of IB Customers to be seen when the IB Reform Pilot takes effect* [1]
Rothesay Jobcentre Plus (JCP)	202	825	4	6
Ayr Jobcentre (JC)	2,200	0	80	0
Ayr Social Security Office (SSO)	0	16,782	0	0
Cumnock JC	798	0	6	0
Cumnock SSO	0	688	0	0
Girvan JC	270	0	17	0

Ayrshire and Bute

Office	*Number of JSA Customers Registered*	*Number of IS and IB Customers Registered*	*Number of Disability Employment Advisors Caseload Customers*	*Number of IB Customers to be seen when the IB Reform Pilot takes effect* [1]
Irvine JC	1,396	0	68	0
Irvine SSO	0	17,471	0	0
Kilbirnie JC	550	0	15	0
Kilmamock JC	2,204	0	77	0
Kilmarnock SSO	0	10,478	0	0
Kilwinning JC	750	0	15	0
Largs JC	260	0	6	0
Saltcoats JC	1420	0	38	0
Troon JC	244	0	6	0
Total	10,294	46,244	332	6

[1] Rothesay Jobcentre Plus covers the Isle of Bute and is part of the IB Reform Pilot. Weekly figure provided.

Source:

Jobcentre Plus Management Information System Programme.

I hope this is helpful.

Maternity Allowance

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measures he has taken to publicise the eligibility criteria for maternity allowance. [163339]

Maria Eagle: The eligibility criteria for Maternity Allowance are publicised in a number of ways. The Department publishes a leaflet which is available through both its offices and post offices.

A Maternity Certificate is issued to all women by their GP or midwife from their twenty-first week of pregnancy; it contains basic information on entitlement to Maternity Allowance and directs potential claimants to Jobcentre Plus or Social Security Offices for further guidance and claim forms.

Information is available on a number of websites including the Department's own site, and those of Jobcentre Plus and the Department of Trade and Industry; Inland Revenue guidance also signposts our information sources.

Employed women who are not entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay should also be advised by their employer to claim Maternity Allowance. The Department's leaflet is also included in the bounty pack women receive following childbirth.

New Deal

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the estimated cost of the New Deal is in the current financial year, broken down by programme. [158417]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the following table:

Estimated New Deal Costs[1]

£ million

	2003–04 Plans
New Deal for Young People	340
New Deal 25 plus	255
New Deal 50 plus	56
New Deal for Lone Parents	82
New Deal for Disabled People	27
New Deal for partners	11

Note:

[1] Includes programme and administrative spend.

Source:

Department for Work and Pensions Departmental Report 2003.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people have participated in the New Deal since its inception, broken down by programme; [158418]

(2) what the *(a)* planned and *(b)* actual cost of the New Deal has been in each year of its operation; [158419]

(3) what the average cost per participant of the New Deal has been to date. [158425]

Maria Eagle: The information requested on the number of New Deal participants is in the following table:

	Number of New Deal Participants [1]	*Number of New Deal Starts* [2]
New Deal for Young People[3]	831,350	1,081,680
New Deal 25plus[4]	496,790	673,790
New Deal for Lone Parents[5]	459,070	577,710
New Deal for Disabled People[6]	69,450	69,450
New Deal for Partners[7]	7,480	7,480
New Deal 50 plus[8]	98,040	98,040

[1] All figures relate to individuals who have started each programme.

[2] An individual may have had more than one start over the period. A distinction between individuals and starts for NDDP, NDP, and ND50+ can't be made.

[3] January 1998—December 2003

[4] April 1998—December 2003

[5] October 1998—December 2003

[6] Pilots launched in September 1998. National network of NDDP job brokers launched from July 2001. Up to December 2003.

[7] Launched as New Deal for Partners of Unemployed People in April 1999. Extended to partners of other benefit recipients in April 2001. Up to December 2003.

[8] New Deal 50 plus was introduced in nine pathfinder areas on 25 October 1999 and rolled out nationally on 3 April 2000. Up to March 2003.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database, Information and Analysis Directorate, DWP

The information requested on the planned and actual cost of the New Deal is in the following table:

£ million

	New Deal for Young People	New Deal 25 plus	New Deal 50 plus	New Deal for Lone Parents	New Deal for Disabled People	New Deal for Partners
1997–98[1]						
Outturn[2]	43	—	—	—	—	—
1998–99						
Plans[3]	[8]525	114	—	18	3	—
Outturn[2]	260	34	—	18	1	1
1999–2000						
Plans[4]	764	223	—	51	6	15
Outturn[2]	370	97	3	39	22	5
2000–01						
Plans[5]	[9]402	130	16	43	—	18
Outturn[2]	412	60	56	43	14	11
2001–02						
Plans[6]	[10]366	183	16	72	55	17
Outturn[2]	308	213	87	46	10	8
2002–03						
Plans[7]	[10]302	215	16	121	79	26
Outturn[2, 11]	339	254	106	80	27	6
2003–04						
Plans[2]	340	255	56	82	27	11

[1] Planned figures not available prior to start of financial year.
[2] *Source:* 2003 DWP Departmental Report (Cm 5921).
[3] *Source:* 1998 DfEE Departmental Report (Cm 3910). Employment Service running and programme costs funded from the Windfall Tax—1998–99 requirement.
[4] *Source:* 1999 DfEE Departmental Report (Cm 4202). Employment Service New Deal running and programme costs funded from the Windfall Tax—1999–00 plans. Figures exclude measures for New Deal for the over 50s and New Deal for Young People announced in the March 1999 Budget.
[5] *Source:* 2000 DfEE Departmental Report (Cm 4602). Employment Service New Deal running and programme costs funded from the Windfall Tax—2000–01 plans.
[6] *Source:* 2001 DfEE Departmental Report (Cm 5102). DfEE and Employment Service running and programme costs funded from the Windfall Tax/Employment Opportunities Fund—2001–02 plans.
[7] *Source:* 2001 DfEE Departmental Report (Cm 5102). DfEE and Employment Service running and programme costs funded from the Windfall Tax/ Employment Opportunities Fund—2002–03 plans.
[8] Includes £25 million capital costs.
[9] Includes New Deal Innovation Fund.
[10] Includes New Deal Innovation Fund and New Deal Employer Managers.
[11] Estimated
Notes:
All figures rounded to nearest £ million.
All planned figures quoted were the latest published in the appropriate Departmental Report.

Information on the cost per individual participant up to March 2002, the last financial year to have confirmed outturn cost figures, is in the following table:

	Actual Cost up to March 2002 (£millions)[1]	Number of New Deal Participants up to March 2002[2, 3]	Number of New Deal Starts up to March 2002[2, 4]	Average Cost per individual up to March 2002 (rounded to the nearest £10)	Average Cost per start up to March 2002 (rounded to the nearest £10)
New Deal for Young People	1,393	[5]552,882	[5]788,240	2,520	1,770
New Deal 25plus	404	[6]366,190	[6]481, 230	1,100	840
New Deal for Lone Parents	146	[7]248,170	[7]343,040	590	430
New Deal for Disabled People	47	[8]12,960	[8]12,960	3,630	3,630
New Deal for Partners	25	[9]5,150	[9]5,150	4,850	4,850
New Deal 50 plus	146	[10]66,970	[10]66,970	2,180	2,180
Total	2,161	1,252,322	1,697,590	1,730	1,270

[1] *Source:* DWP Departmental Report 2003
[2] *Source:* New Deal Evaluation Database, Information and Analysis Directorate, DWP
[3] All figures relate to individuals who have started each programme
[4] An individual may have had more than one start over the period. A distinction between individuals and starts for NDDP, NDP, and ND50+ can't be made.
[5] January 1998—March 2002
[6] April 1998—March 2002
[7] October 1998—March 2002
[8] Pilots launched in September 1998. National network of NDDP job brokers launched from July 2001. Up to March 2002.
[9] Launched as New Deal for Partners of Unemployed People in April 1999. Extended to partners of other benefit recipients in April 2001. Up to December March 2002
[10] New Deal 50 plus was introduced in nine pathfinder areas on 25 October 1999 and rolled out nationally on 3 April 2000. Up to March 2002.

Over one million people have been helped in to work through the New Deal since its creation, but it has also been a success in financial terms. NIESR estimated that the economy as a whole is richer by £500 million a year as a result of the New Deal for Young People. Independent evaluation has also found that the New Deal for Lone Parents saves money; with every lone parent moving into work equating to an exchequer saving of nearly £1,600.

Opinion Sampling

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* focus groups and *(b)* opinion polls in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [162761]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions wants to hear what people have to say about proposed new policies and procedures, and about how our services are meeting the needs of our customers. There are several methods by which we do this:

consultation exercises; conducted in accordance with Cabinet Office guidance;

meetings with customer representatives to obtain their views and feedback;

customer surveys, both national and local;

research, contracted in accordance with agreed tendering procedures which;

are subject to the usual rules that spending should represent good value for money.

Because the Department arranges its own consultative meetings, often within its respective businesses, detailed information about expenditure on all of these is not held centrally, and the information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Costs of our public opinion surveys over the last 3 years

	£
2003–04	25,556.25
2002–03	23,441.25
2001–02	42,476.25

Pensioners

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether a final date has been set after which pensioners who do not want to change their payment arrangements will no longer be able to use pension books. [161474]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* The last pension book foils can be dated no later than 28 February 2005. This is to allow for three-month validity for encashment prior to the end of the order book contract on 31 May 2005.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what alternative methods of payment he is proposing for people who currently receive a state pension or other benefits by order book, girocheque or payable order but will be unable to transfer to direct payment; [165212]

(2) who will be eligible to receive their *(a)* state pension and *(b)* other benefits by methods other than direct payment. [165213]

Mr. Pond: Research has shown that 87 per cent. of all our customers and 90 per cent. of pensioners already have an account suitable for direct payment.

Direct payment will be the best and most secure option for the overwhelming majority of our customers, giving them a more modern and reliable method of payment with greater choice about where and when they collect their money.

We have always recognised that there will be a small number of people who we cannot pay directly into an account. We are finalising the design of a method of payment to properly meet the needs of these customers and it will be cheque based.

Customers who have not supplied account details will be contacted at an appropriate time and the options available to them will be fully explained. This will include the fact that order books will no longer be a payment option.

The move to direct payment is progressing well. Key figures on the progress of conversion to direct payment are available in the Library updated every four weeks.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners whose pension is paid by order book receive their pension on *(a)* Monday, *(b)* Tuesday, *(c)* Wednesday, *(d)* Thursday and *(e)* Friday. [148968]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* The following table shows a breakdown of State Pensioners receiving their payment by means of an order book, by day of payment.

	Number
Monday	2,814,716
Tuesday	430,581
Thursday	815,106
Unknown	4,374
Total	4,064,777

Notes:

1. Figures refer to a snapshot of live accounts in payment on 29 November 2003.
2. Excludes State Pension recipients who receive State Pension combined with another benefit and are paid through another benefit system.
3. Day of payment is calculated by looking at the last payment authorised by the Pension Service, which may be in the future.
4. The day of payment used in this analysis may not be the pensioners usual day of payment if their last payment day in this instrument of payment is altered for any reason (e.g. Christmas).
5. This table shows the day State Pension is paid, not the day the claimant picks up their pension from the Post Office.
6. This answer differs to PQ/04/145975 (Mr Alan Reid) because of change in methodology for calculating these figures.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample

Tony Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Department's policy to persuade people to have their pension paid into a bank account includes telephone calls urging them to open a bank account. [164898]

Mr. Pond: Already 87 per cent. of all customers, rising to 90 per cent. of pensioners, have access to a bank account that can receive Direct Payment. It is the role of staff to provide customers with factual information on all of their account options. It is for customers themselves to decide which type of account they wish to have their pensions and benefits paid into. The conversion process normally consists of one or more mailings sent directly to the customer, followed by a telephone call if there is no response to the letter(s). The mailing advises customers that this may happen.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* the West Chelmsford constituency collect benefits from post offices. [165228]

Mr. Pond: Information available on pensioners (women over 60 and men over 65) as at 31 December 2003 in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* West Chelmsford constituency receiving their benefits by a method of payment collectable at a Post Office is shown in the following table. Included in these figures are customers paid into Post Office Card Accounts and customers paid by girocheque. Girocheques are encashable either at a Post Office or they can be paid into a bank or building society account.

	Number
Essex	100,215
West Chelmsford	6,050

Some customers who are paid direct into a bank or building society account can also collect their payments in cash at Post Offices through the wider range of banking services now available at the Post Office. There is no data available on the number of benefit claims collected in this way.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* the West Chelmsford constituency have migrated from over-the-counter benefit payments to direct transfers in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [165229]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the format requested. Figures are only available from December 2002.

Information available for the number of pensioners (women aged 60 and over, men aged 65 and over) who migrated from over the counter benefit payments to Direct Payments into bank and building society accounts between December 2002 and December 2003 is shown in the table.

	Number
West Chelmsford constituency	950
Essex	12,345

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Hemsworth constituency receive benefits at the Post Office. [145918]

Mr. Pond *[pursuant to his reply, 21 January 2004, Official Report, c. 1347W]:* The number of Pensioners in the Hemsworth constituency receiving at least one benefit which can be collected at the Post Office is 10,905. This information has been compiled from data available on 29 November 2003.

War Pensions accounts are not included in this reply as they are now the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence.

Linda Perham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on changes to services to *(a)* employers and *(b)* pensioners in the London borough of Redbridge since 1997. [164875]

Maria Eagle: The delivery of services to Employers in Redbridge is via the Employer Direct Cali Centre in Southend which opened in March 2001.

Employer Direct handles inbound calls, faxes and emails from employers wishing to place a vacancy with Jobcentre Plus. They maintain contact with the employer through the life of the vacancy through the Contact Centre within the Region where the employer is based.

The Pension Service has been developed as a customer-focused organisation after researching what customers need and expect from the Government in relation to pensions business.

The London Pension Centre in Glasgow has been providing a service to pensioners in the London borough of Redbridge since February 2004. The Pension Centre provides a dedicated service to Pensioners, handling their pension inquiries and applications. Prior to this date these services were provided by Ilford Social Security Office.

Pension Centres are supported by a local service operating in the community—providing face-to-face contact through home visits, appointment surgeries and other outreach activity in locations that customers find convenient, such as libraries, community centres and premises provided by partner organisations, allowing more customers to access The Pension Service.

Population Increase (London)

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what provision he has made for the increase in his Department's services to address London's projected population increase; and what plans he has put in place to deal with the employment needs for the population increase. [163407]

Mr. Browne: The Department for Work and Pensions has standards of service for each person receiving benefits or pensions and the Department's business plans ensure that there are sufficient staff and resource to deliver these standards of service.

Such planning will, of course, take account of the size of the London population. It will also need to take account of the proportion of people claiming benefits and pensions. For example, between May 1997 and May 2003 the numbers claiming working age benefits in London has fallen from 830,000 to 691,000 and the proportion of the population from 18.8 per cent. to 14.7 per cent.

At the time of the pre-Budget report 2003 DWP together with the Treasury published a report "Full Employment in Every Region". This examined the employment situation in all regions including London and set out the how labour market policy is developing to deal with London's employment needs.

Post Office Card Account

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what assessment he has made of the effect in terms of timescale and cost of altering the Post Office card account application process to allow account details to be provided from Post Office Limited direct to his Department; whether he has received representations from *(a)* Post Office Limited and *(b)* others relating to the Post Office card account application process; and if he will make a statement; [162800]

(2) what assessment he has made of the timescale involved in processing an application to receive pension and benefits into *(a)* a Post Office Card Account and *(b)* a bank or building society account; whether he has

assessed differences in the timescale of the different application processes for direct payment; and if he will make a statement. [163073]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* We do recognise that some customers have been slow to send their Post Office card account details to the DWP. The DWP typically send out a conversion letter to customers shortly after they have been sent a new order book. As order books normally last for 20 weeks, this gives the customer plenty of time to open an account if necessary and supply account details.

However, it is clear that many customers do not realise that they then need to provide DWP with their card account details. We are working with the Post Office, sub-postmasters and others to solve this problem. We have improved customer information and sub-postmaster training. These actions have already had some impact and the number of customers returning account details is starting to increase. Further action will also be taken to simplify the process for customers returning account details to DWP.

Mr. Peter Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been spent in marketing the Post Office Card Account in the last year in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the UK. [155474]

Maria Eagle: The Department does not market specifically the Post Office Card Account. Instead customers are given information on all the accounts available for Direct Payment. The information is presented in a way that enables customers to decide which account option is best for their individual circumstances.

The total publicity cost for the Direct Payment information campaign during 2003–04 is estimated to be £12,462,000. This includes advertising. As this is a national information campaign, it is not possible to isolate costs for Scotland.

Prescribed Disease A11

Liz Blackman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he received the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council Report on Prescribed Disease A11; and when he will publish his response to the report. [164180]

Mr. Browne: My right hon. Friend received the report by the Industrial Injury Advisory Council on Prescribed Disease A11 on 23 March 2004. We are currently giving careful consideration to the Council's findings and hope to publish the report after the Easter recess.

Redundancies/Staff Reduction

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what research his Department has conducted into the effects of his Department's planned redundancies and redeployment of staff over the next four years; if he will place copies in the Library; and if he will make a statement. [163295]

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress has been made in achieving a gross reduction of 40,000 civil servants in his Department since the Budget. [165020]

Maria Eagle: The Department has been developing plans for a reduction of up to 18,000 posts since 2002. This is now part of a four-year plan to reduce the number of posts by 30,000. This will reflect the new business model being rolled-out in Jobcentre Plus including more front-line staff conducting work-focused interviews; a Pension Transformation Programme and reductions in staffing in The Pension Service; the introduction of Child Support reform; and savings in "back office" functions in HR, finance and IT support.

The detail of how reductions will be allocated and profiled between businesses and corporate services will be developed in the normal way through our business planning processes and in discussion with the trade unions. We will provide further detail after the Spending Review settlement.

Register of Interests

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the requirements are on officials in his Department to declare current interests; and what register of interests is kept for his departmental officials. [164706]

Maria Eagle: The Civil Service Management Code sets out the requirement for civil servants declaring any conflicts of interest. The Department for Work and Pensions requires individuals to seek permission from their line managers before undertaking any outside employment or activity, which could have a conflict of interest with working for the Department. These include: Political Activities, Outside Business Appointments, Non-Executive Directorships, secondary jobs, managing a board and lodging establishment/nursing home, membership of non-political organisations, Public Service, enlistment in HM Forces, voluntary reserve and auxiliary forces. There is no central register of interests; it is up to individuals and line managers to record them.

Vaccine Damages Payments

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1608W, which of the 571 cases identified involved *(a)* an extension of time limits for claiming and *(b)* the reduction of the disability threshold; and how many claims in each of these categories have been (i) successful and (ii) unsuccessful. [164716]

Maria Eagle: The 571 cases identified under the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO), break down into the following:

208 were originally disallowed because they were out of time;

363 were below the original disability threshold.

Of the 571 cases identified, 337 further claims have so far been received. Of these:

150 were originally disallowed on time limit grounds. Two of these have been successful, 143[1] have been unsuccessful and five are pending;

187 were originally disallowed on disablement grounds. Six of these have been successful, 173[2] have been unsuccessful and eight are pending.

Notes:

[1,2] Of these 316 subsequent disallowances, 275 have been disallowed on the grounds that causation has not been accepted, while 41 have been disallowed where causation has been accepted but the vaccinated person is deemed not to be over 60 per cent. disabled.

[3] Causation is accepted where on the balance of probability, it is determined that a person is, or was immediately before their death, severely disabled due to vaccination against any of the specified diseases.

Working at Height

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Working at Height Directive applies to *(a)* mountaineering, *(b)* rock climbing, *(c)* acrobatics in circuses and gymnasiums and *(d)* other outdoor leisure activities. [163673]

Mr. Browne: The Temporary Work at Height Directive (2001/45/EC) is intended to reduce the risk of falls from height, which account for a large percentage of fatal or major injuries at work. The Directive has the same scope of application as the Framework Directive (89/391/EEC), and applies to all sectors of activity where temporary work at height is carried out.

Therefore, the Directive would apply to all these activities when performed as a work activity. It would not apply to private individuals who partake in these tasks as a sport, or leisure activity. However, it is expected to have little impact on activities where employers fully comply with existing good practice.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights projects in 2002 *(a)* to establish a dialogue on human rights between the EU and Iran and *(b)* to strengthen the labour movement in Tunisia; and what his Department's involvement was in each project. [165205]

Mr. Rammell: Decisions about the individual projects funded by the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights are made by the European Commission and local EC Delegations. They are also responsible for managing and evaluating the projects.

The EU Committee on Human Rights and Democracy allocates EU budget resources to projects in third countries and is responsible for evaluating the impact of the fund.

The UK is represented on the Committee by officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the UK Permanent Representation to the EU.

Burma

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will advocate a strengthening of the EU Common Position on Burma at the forthcoming review. [164199]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Prime Minister Khin Nyunt of Burma's State Peace and Development Council announced a "roadmap to national reconciliation" on 30 August 2003. The first step of the roadmap is to reconvene the National Convention to agree a new constitution, as outlined by Foreign Minister Win Aung at the Bangkok Process meeting in December. In light of that, we believe that it would send a wrong signal to strengthen sanctions under the EU's Common Position on Burma at a time when the regime may be moving forward with the political process. We are therefore prepared to support a rollover of existing measures in the EU Common Position on Burma which already contains tough measures against the regime. However, we remain ready to respond proportionately to positive or negative progress in Burma.

China

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions the Government has held with the Chinese government on Tibetan political prisoners. [163679]

Mr. Rammell: I personally raised the case of one Tibetan political prisoner with Assistant Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui in Beijing on 17 December 2003.

Tibetan political prisoners are included on the list of individual cases of concern which we hand over to the Chinese authorities, in the context of our biannual Human Rights Dialogue. The most recent dialogue round was held in Beijing on 10–11 November 2003.

Phuntsog Nyidrol one of the prisoners on our list was released earlier this month.

The EU also includes Tibetans on its list of individual cases.

Cyprus

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with political leaders in Cyprus with a view to securing a deal to reunite Cyprus before 1 May. [164191]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary met the Foreign Minister of Cyprus at the European Council on 25 March. On 31 March, the Foreign Secretary spoke to the Greek Foreign Minister, who was in Switzerland for the final stage of settlement negotiations. He also recently spoke to the Turkish Foreign Minister. The Foreign Secretary discussed Europe's role in securing a Cyprus settlement in recent meetings with EU Foreign Ministers. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has written to the Prime Ministers of Turkey and Greece, and President Papadopoulos of Cyprus, in recent days.

The Foreign Secretary has made a written statement today on the outcome of the Buergenstock negotiations. With the help of the UN Secretary-General the leaders in Cyprus have peace within their grasp. We are calling on all the people of the island to seize that chance. It will then be for the EU to accommodate the terms of a Cyprus settlement in line with the principles upon which

the EU is founded. The EU reiterated that commitment as recently as the last European Council on 26 March 2004.

European Constitution

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's position is on Article 51 of the draft EU Constitution. [164494]

Mr. MacShane: The Government are content with Article 51 of the draft Constitutional Treaty on the status of churches and non-confessional organisations. The Article reflects the recognition in Declaration 11 to the Treaty of Amsterdam that religion and its structure and organisation in the member states are not areas of Union legislative activity. It also makes it clear that the Union equally respects the status of religious and secular organisations and shall maintain an open transparent and regular dialogue with them. The Government consider that maintaining this dialogue is a normal function of a democratic and pluralist Europe.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will apply to the EU Constitution a European version of the criterion applied to the 1949 Washington Treaty which declared that it should be understandable to a milkman from Omaha. [164543]

Mr. MacShane: If and when an EU constitutional treaty is agreed I will seek to publish a guide to it in plain English that milk persons in Ogmore can understand.

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he expects the negotiations on the European Constitution to restart in the near future. [156778]

Mr. MacShane: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave to the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Richard Shepherd) in the House on 30 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1415.

Iran and Syria

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made in the past six months of whether the governments of *(a)* Iran and *(b)* Syria have given support to terrorist groups. [164368]

Mr. Rammell: The UK Government are concerned that Palestinian terrorist groups may draw support from inside Iran and Syria. We continue to press both the Iranian and Syrian authorities on this and, in Syria's case, on the activities of those groups with a presence in Syria. Separately, we have urged the Iranian Government to take effective action against any members of Al-Qaeda seeking refuge in Iran and the Syrian Government to act to stem the flow of terrorists into Iraq. We and EU partners have made clear that relations with both countries can only develop on the basis of action to address political concerns, including terrorism.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how the Iraqi Governing Council will be different after the transfer of sovereignty; and if he will make a statement. [164085]

Mr. Rammell: The Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) will cease to exist as the embodiment of Iraqi sovereignty (as provided for in UNSCR 1511) after 30 June. As set out in Article 2B(1) of the Transitional Administrative Law agreed on 8 March, it will be replaced by a fully sovereign Iraqi Interim Government. The best way to establish the Interim Government is now under discussion among Iraqis, the IGC and the Coalition Provisional Authority. The UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser, Lakhdar Brahimi is due to return to Iraq soon to take part in these discussions.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what protection is provided for religious communities in Iraq. [164027]

Mr. Rammell: The coalition is working hard to strengthen the Iraqi security and judicial sectors to provide law and order for all Iraqis and to safeguard their rights.

Those rights are laid out in the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) agreed by the Iraqi Governing Council on March 8. A copy of the TAL has been placed in the Library of the House. Article 12 states that

> "All Iraqis are equal in their rights without regard to gender, sect, opinion, belief, nationality, religion, or origin, and they are equal before the law. Discrimination against an Iraqi citizen on the basis of his gender, nationality, religion, or origin is prohibited."

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what protection for the role of women in Government there will be in the plans to hand over power to an Iraqi Government. [164088]

Mr. Rammell: The Transitional Administrative Law includes provision for an electoral system designed to achieve a goal of no less than one-quarter representation of women in the Transitional National Assembly to be elected no later than January 2005. The Coalition Provisional Authority is discussing with the Iraqi Governing Council, other Iraqis and the UN how best to achieve this target and to ensure women are strongly represented in the Interim Government to be established after 30 June.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when a Minister in his Department last visited *(a)* Singapore, *(b)* Malaysia and *(c)* Thailand. [164208]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary visited Singapore between 8–9 January 2003 and Malaysia on 10 January 2003. My hon. Friend the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) (Ben Bradshaw) was the last FCO Minister to visit Thailand, between 16–19 December 2001.

Register of Interests

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the requirements are on officials in his Department to declare current interests; and what register of interests is kept for his departmental officials. [164709]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The requirements for officials in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to declare current interests are contained in the Diplomatic Service Regulations and Home Civil Service Regulations. These regulations, stemming from the Civil Service Management Code, set out the principal terms governing employment in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and highlight the general principle of conduct that

"you must not use your official position to further your private interests".

Separate regulations cover the circumstances in which officers must declare:

Gifts, advantages and hospitality

Private occupations

Business interests

Declarations and paperwork relating to private occupations and business interests are held on individual files.

Taiwan

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent election in Taiwan. [164536]

Mr. Rammell: The United Kingdom Government continues to welcome the development of democracy in Taiwan. On 26 March Taiwan's Central Election Committee announced formally that Chen Shui-bian had won the election. The Opposition candidates have asked for a recount and a judicial review. The United Kingdom hopes that the issue can be dealt with through the appropriate legal mechanisms.

Turkey

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Turkish authorities in relation to *(a)* human rights issues and *(b)* the possibility of accession to the EU. [164200]

Mr. MacShane: Both my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I frequently discuss human rights and Turkey's EU accession prospects with Turkish Ministers—most recently in the margins of the spring European Council. The Foreign Secretary also raised these issues with Foreign Minister Gul in Istanbul on 3 March. We repeatedly affirm the UK's strong support for Turkey's EU aspirations and urge Turkish Ministers to press ahead with implementation of human rights reforms.

Venezuela

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is on promoting regime change in Venezuela; what discussions he or his officials have had with United States counterparts on this matter; and if he will make a statement. [164606]

Mr. Rammell: The UK with its European Union partners has made clear its position regarding Venezuela in the most recent EU Declaration of 4 March 2004 which encourages the country to find a democratic and peaceful solution to its current political crisis. We have regular discussions with the US on a range of foreign policy issues, including the situation in Venezuela.

Visas

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with US immigration authorities in relation to proposed changes to visa requirements for British citizens. [164198]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Worthing, West (Peter Bottomley) on 10 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1532W.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Council Tax

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the cost to *(a)* the Valuation Office Agency, *(b)* the valuation tribunals and *(c)* central government of administering council tax and council tax benefit in financial year 2003–04. [164486]

Mr. Raynsford: The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) budget for council tax work in 2003–04 is about £29 million. The part of the Valuation Tribunals budget for 2003–04 relating to council tax work is approximately £1 million. The Government is responsible for the policy and legislation rather than the administration of council tax and council tax benefit.

Fire Service

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the training costs were *(a)* per officer and *(b)* in total for new recruits to the Fire Service in (i) the East Midlands and (ii) West Derbyshire in each year since 1997. [163738]

Mr. Raynsford: The information is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people were recruited to the Fire Service in *(a)* the East Midlands and *(b)* West Derbyshire in each year since 1997; and what percentage of each year's intake remains as serving officers, in each case. [163740]

Mr. Raynsford: Information since 1998 for the five fire and rescue services within the East Midlands Region on the number of people recruited to the Fire Service (in

whole time, retained, fire control and non-uniformed positions) are tabled as follows. Data prior to 1998 are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Information is not available for West Derbyshire, but is available for Derbyshire FRS as a whole.

Data are not held centrally on the percentage of each year's fire and rescue service recruits who remain on as serving officers for East Midlands region or for West Derbyshire. The cost of gathering the information about the FRS concerned could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Number of successful applicants in East Midlands fire and rescue services between 1998–99 and 2002–03

	Derbyshire	*Leicestershire*	*Lincolnshire*	*Northamptonshire*	*Nottinghamshire*	*Regional total*
Whole-time						
1998–99	5	20	28	0	28	81
1999–2000	14	18	0	14	18	64
2000–01	0	10	0	20	24	54
2001–02	18	47	8	0	25	98
2002–03	6	0	36	25	34	101
Retained						
1998–99	16	14	68	19	45	162
1999–2000	39	12	72	30	39	192
2000–01	26	24	42	30	43	165
2001–02	34	17	81	35	46	213
2002–03	37	24	31	23	39	154
Fire control						
1998–99	0	0	0	0	2	2
1999–2000	2	5	0	0	2	9
2000–01	0	3	3	3	0	9
2001–02	2	0	8	7	0	17
2002–03	4	7	6	2	0	19
Non-uniformed						
1998–99	14	2	9	5	13	43
1999–2000	0	6	8	4	11	29
2000–01	15	9	6	10	10	50
2001–02	13	9	18	0	15	55
2002–03	13	23	8	8	16	68

Government Offices for the Regions

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the budget is for each of the Government offices for the regions for 2003–04; and what the budget of each has been for each of the previous three years. [164828]

Mr. Raynsford: The running cost budgets of Government Offices for the Regions have increased as more Departments have devolved more work to be carried out in the regions. The budgets for 2003–04 and each of the previous three years are tabled as follows:

Amounts in £000

GO	*2003–04*
North East	12,061
North West	17,508
Yorkshire and Humber	12,848
West Midlands	13,043
East Midlands	10,861
East	12,950
South East	14,461
South West	14,053
London	16,611
Totals	124,396

Amounts in £000

GO	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
North East	8,197.33	8,973.88	10,074.76
North West	13,651.03	15,250.91	13,543.84
Yorkshire and Humber	9,357.21	9,889.50	11,094.48
West Midlands	9,960.77	10,315.96	10,584.49

Amounts in £000

GO	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
East Midlands	7,335.77	8,200.80	8,835.46
East	7,542.50	8,532.82	9,357.24
South East	9,477.27	10,309.34	10,860.12
South West	8,711.39	10,671.85	11,752.84
London	13,860.98	13,175.10	14,082.01
Totals	88,094.25	95,320.16	102,185.24

The growth in the Government Office over the last three years is attributable to additional sponsor Departments joining and contributing staff and funding to the network, notably Defra (formerly MAFF) in 2001–02 and Home Office in 2002–03.

Home Information Packs

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what *(a)* representations his Department has received from and *(b)* what meetings his Department has had with the housing industry regarding the proposed introduction of home information packs; [165114]

(2) what estimate he has made of the percentage change in the number of failed housing market transactions that would result from the proposed introduction of home information packs; [165115]

(3) how many home inspectors will be required to fulfil the requirement of the home information pack proposals; how they will be trained; how they will be insured; and over what timescale they will be available; [165116]

(4) what research has been *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* undertaken by his Department to assess the economic costs and benefits to the housing market, in particular in areas of low-demand, of the introduction of home information packs; [165117]

(5) what assessment his Department has made of the pilots carried out on home information packs for house sales. [165118]

Keith Hill: All the main professional and trade bodies involved in the home buying and selling process have been actively involved in helping steer research and develop proposals for home information packs. These organisations frequently express views to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. They are closely involved in finalising arrangements for the smooth implementation of home information packs.

Research carried out in 1998 showed that 28 per cent. of home sale transactions failed after terms have been agreed, costing buyers and sellers about £350 million each year in wasted expenditure. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expect home information packs to reduce significantly this failure and waste.

Between 7,500 and 8,500 home inspectors will be needed to prepare home condition reports and 90 per cent. of these have already been identified within the property professions. Candidates will be trained within the educational sector and property industry in accordance with approved National Occupational Standards. They will be covered by indemnity insurance and the required number will be available before the implementation of the home information pack.

A regulatory impact assessment published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister following consultation with the industry provides details of anticipated costs and benefits arising from home information packs. Following extensive research on this subject, we published a consultation paper "the home information pack in low demand low value areas" in March 2003. A summary of responses to the consultation was published on 3 February 2004. Copies are available in the Library of the House.

In December 1999 we launched a pilot scheme in Bristol to test the practical operation of packs. This showed that home information packs can be assembled quickly, inject transparency into the home buying and selling process and help with the early identification and resolution of problems.

Home Initiatives

Mr. Alan Campbell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effect of *(a)* the Starter Home Initiative and *(b)* the Abandoned Home Initiative in North Tyneside. [165360]

Keith Hill: Since September 2001, the Starter Home Initiative (SHI) has been helping key workers into home ownership in areas where the high cost of housing serves to undermine recruitment and retention of skilled staff in our key public services. It has not been available to key workers in the North East. The SHI was superseded from 1 April by a new key worker housing programme—Key Worker Living. This is also not available in the North East.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is not aware of an Abandoned Homes Initiative. However, our Market Renewal Pathfinders are a comprehensive programme to tackle low demand and abandonment in nine areas of England, including Tyneside. The boundaries of the Tyneside scheme, which include parts of Newcastle upon Tyne and Gateshead, but not the North Tyneside council district, were drawn up following an analysis of local housing markets, using a "worst first" approach. The integrated approach to spatial and economic issues being adopted by the pathfinders should bring substantial benefits to the wider sub-region.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Mr. Reed: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to permit local authorities to charge landlords council tax for houses in multiple occupation occupied solely by students; and if he will make a statement. [162017]

Mr. Raynsford: No. Dwellings occupied entirely by students are exempt from council tax because unlike other groups of people on low incomes, students are not normally entitled to income related benefits such as housing and council tax benefit. If the Government were to make owners of student accommodation liable for council tax, it would not necessarily follow that they would ultimately bear the costs of the tax. This is because landlords could simply pass on the extra costs to the students through their rent.

Key Workers

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what definition he uses of the category key worker. [164650]

Keith Hill: For the purposes of the recently announced Key Worker Living programme, a key worker is defined as someone employed by the public sector; in a frontline role delivering an essential public service where there are serious recruitment and retention problems; and in a group recommended for inclusion by Regional Housing Boards.

Local Authority Standards (Training)

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will provide central funding to ensure that there is consistency in the level of training offered to local authority standards committee members. [165626]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister already funds the Standards Board for England, which has issued guidance to assist members of standards committees to carry out their role. The Board will continue to issue guidance as it considers appropriate on matters relating to the conduct of members of authorities, including guidance to standards committee members. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister relies on the Board's guidance, which has been well received by authorities, to promote consistency of standards.

Local Government (Local Labour Agreements)

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which councils operate local labour agreements. [164888]

Mr. Raynsford: This information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

M11/Stansted Corridor

Mr. Burns: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list those parts of the Chelmsford local authority area in the West Chelmsford parliamentary constituency which are included in the M11/Stansted corridor as a designated area for development; and if he will make a statement. [165066]

Keith Hill: Chelmsford local authority area is not included in the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough corridor. My hon. Friend the Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper), made a statement on 2 February 2004 listing the local authorities in the corridor. A copy of this statement is available in the Library of the House.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the set-up costs of elected regional assemblies he estimates will be *(a)* premises, *(b)* wages and salaries, *(c)* equipment and stationery and *(d)* other costs. [164831]

Mr. Raynsford: The costs of setting up an elected regional assembly will vary between regions, largely because the cost of referendums and elections depends upon the size of the region's electorate. For these reasons the proportions of the various elements of the estimated set-up costs will also vary between regions.

Regional Government Staff

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his Answer of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 168W, on regional government, whether those figures included *(a)* casual staff, *(b)* staff on fixed-term appointments, *(c)* staff seconded out, *(d)* staff on career breaks, *(e)* staff on maternity leave and *(f)* staff on special leave without pay. [164827]

Yvette Cooper: The figures in the answer included casual staff and fixed term appointments, as well as permanent staff then working in the Government Offices. The numbers of staff seconded out, on maternity leave and on special leave without pay was as follows:

Government office	*Staff seconded out*	*Career breaks*	*Maternity leave*	*Special leave without pay*
London	12	5	2	1
East	4	7	4	0
West Midlands	10	2	8	1
East Midlands	9	2	2	0
North West	17	5	4	0
North East	6	1	2	0
Yorkshire and the Humber	4	3	4	0
South West	0	0	0	0
South East	18	10	4	0

Robson Brown

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the activities being undertaken by Robson Brown for his Department. [164830]

Yvette Cooper: To date Robson Brown have undertaken the design of the "Your Say" Elected Regional Assemblies logo and supporting material.

They are also advising the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the 'Your Say' information campaign.

Staff from Robson Brown have been assisting with the mounting of events and hearings associated with the campaign throughout the three regions.

Shell Haven Port

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to make a statement on the recommendations of the public inquiry into the proposed Shell Haven Port in the Thames Estuary. [162197]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

As the application for the proposed London Gateway port at Shell Haven is for my Department to determine. The Inspector's report of the public inquiry has been recently received in my Department and is now under consideration.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what resources his Department makes available to local authorities for sites of special scientific interest; and how much was made available in 2003–04. [164970]

Phil Hope: Local authorities, along with all public bodies have a duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of SSSIs. Local authorities also have responsibilities in respect of SSSIs, especially as planning authorities and as SSSI landowners.

Most funding for local authorities' revenue expenditure, including for example support for education, social services and their responsibilities in this area, is met through general grant which is made up of Revenue Support Grant and National Non-Domestic Rates. General grant totalled £43.894 million in 2003–04, which is an increase of £2.449 million or 5.9 per cent. Decisions on spending priorities are a matter for individual authorities taking into account their statutory responsibilities.

Street Furniture

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proposals he has to protect areas of high environmental value from the impact of street furniture. [165312]

Keith Hill: Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 recognises that the appearance of historic streets can be improved by preserving or reinstating street furniture of historic or architectural interest.

A review of permitted development rights was carried out on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners last year. It recommended several changes to the restrictions placed on development using permitted development rights in sensitive areas and those used to install street furniture by statutory undertakers and local authorities. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expect to consult on changes in the summer.

As part of our on-going work across Government taking forward "Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener" the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is exploring tools that assist local authorities in managing the street environment, recognising the need or co-ordination between a number of organisations and the involvement of local people.

Your Say Campaign

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what spending limit was placed upon the value of the contract for the Your Say campaign when it was put out for tender. [164829]

Mr. Raynsford: The contract was placed on a fixed cost, quotation basis. Each component of the work has been costed separately to ensure best value for money.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Anti-social Behaviour Orders

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what training is given to district judges (crime) for dealing with *(a)* anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) and *(b)* breaches of ASBOs. [164449]

Mr. Leslie: Training for the professional judiciary is the responsibility of the Judicial Studies Board (JSB).

The JSB has not provided any dedicated training events on ASBOs, but the programme for the core seminars for both full and part-time district judges (magistrates courts) allows scope for discussions on the issues arising in sentencing and breach of orders.

Professional judges have access to legislation and Home Office guidance relevant to this area of law, and in addition will refer to any developing law. Detailed guidance on ASBOs was issued to magistrates courts by the Home Office in November 2002. Preliminary Home Office guidance on the new Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 has been issued to all magistrates courts in January 2004.

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he intends to reply to the letter to him from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 8 January with regard to Mrs. V. Bromage, sent to the Cabinet Office and transferred to his Department. [164936]

Mr. Leslie: A reply to my right hon. Friend was signed by Lord Filkin and sent on 22 March.

Departmental Buildings

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what *(a)* renovation and *(b)* maintenance projects on buildings (i) owned and (ii) rented by the Department were undertaken in each of the last five years; and what the associated costs were of each. [163942]

Mr. Leslie: The information on all projects is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, details are available of all schemes with a total project cost of £250,000 and above and these are tabled as follows.

	£	*Renovation/ Maintenance*	*Rented/Owned*
1999–2000			
Cardiff Civil Justice Centre	365,000	Renovation	Rented (historic lease)
Cardiff Crown Court	700,000	Maintenance	Owned
Chelmsford Crown Court	330,225	Renovation	Owned
Inner London Sessions House	1,395,866	Maintenance	Owned
Liverpool Combined Court	388,633	Maintenance	Owned
Manchester Crown Court	742,605	Maintenance	Owned
Manchester Crown Court	203,000	Renovation	Owned
Royal Courts of Justice	406,721	Renovation	Owned
Swansea County Court	253,575	Renovation	Rented
Winchester Combined Court	353,192	Renovation	Rented (historic lease)
2000–01			
Cardiff Crown Court	361,062	Maintenance	Owned
Inner London Sessions House	93,902	Maintenance	Owned
Liverpool Combined Court	507,667	Maintenance	Owned
Manchester Crown Court	1,145,093	Maintenance	Owned
Manchester Crown Court	324,046	Renovation	Owned
Royal Courts of Justice	295,000	Renovation	Owned
Snaresbrook Crown Court	1,333,742	Maintenance	Owned
Swansea County Court	158,346	Renovation	Rented
2001–02			
Birmingham Civil Justice Centre	236,943	Renovation	Rented
Court Service Headquarters	486,000	Renovation	Rented
Leeds Combined Court Centre	1,226,118	Renovation	Owned
Liverpool Combined Court Centre	250,000	Maintenance	Owned
Manchester Crown Court	404,783	Maintenance	Owned
Nottingham Crown and County Court	394,751	Renovation	Owned
Official Solicitor and Public Trustee	260,000	Renovation	Rented
Royal Courts of Justice	363,000	Renovation	Owned
Warrington Combined Court Centre	519,000	Renovation	Owned
2002–03			
Liverpool Combined Court Centre	78,000	Maintenance	Owned
Manchester Crown Court	150,492	Maintenance	Owned
Nottingham Crown and County Court	167,237	Renovation	Owned
Portsmouth Combined Court	527,935	Maintenance	Owned
Worcester Combined Court	271,860	Renovation	Owned
DCA HQ Estate lift refurbishment (three sites)	294,000	—	Rented

	£	Renovation/ Maintenance	Rented/Owned
2003–04			
Central Criminal Court	1,057,000	Renovation	Rented
Edmonton County Court	503,000	Renovation	Owned
Knutsford Crown Court	1,745,000	Maintenance	Owned
Portsmouth Combined Court	368,526	Maintenance	Owned
Swansea Civil Justice Centre	300,000	Renovation	Rented
DCA HQ Estate lift refurbishment (three sites)	102,000	—	Rented

District Judges (Vacancies)

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether vacancies for district judges (crime) are advertised with reference to a particular work location. [164446]

Mr. Leslie: Vacancies for district judges (magistrates courts) are not advertised with reference to a particular work location as district judges have had a national jurisdiction, since the unification of the stipendiary bench in 2000.

Divorces

Mr. Webb: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many divorces took place in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2000 and *(c)* 2003, disaggregated by the lowest sub-regional level possible. [165143]

Mr. Leslie: Figures relating to the number of decrees absolute granted in the county courts of England and Wales during the years requested are provided in a table. A copy has been placed in both Libraries.

Easter Uprising

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs for what reason the Public Record Office retained original documents written by those court-martialled following the Dublin uprising in 1916. [162318]

Mr. Leslie: The Judge Advocate General's office, which organised these courts martial, formed part of the British administration in Ireland. It took the original decision to preserve documents written by the defendants in these cases on the grounds that they formed an integral part of the court proceedings. It was subsequently decided that the court records as a whole merited permanent preservation because of their historical importance.

The documents are available for public inspection at the National Archives at Kew, and copies can be supplied.

Information is held on the National Archives' electronic catalogue, and can be accessed on the internet at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk.

Electoral Registration

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many registered electors for parliamentary elections there were in each year since 1994 in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* Northern Ireland. [160087]

Ruth Kelly: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Alan Whitehead, dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your question concerning the number of registered electors for parliamentary elections in each year from 1994–2003 in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. (160087)

Attached is a table showing parliamentary electors for 1994–2003 inclusive for each of the constituent countries of the United Kingdom. From 2001 the annual canvass resulted in registers that came into effect on 1 December, but prior to this they came into effect on 16 February. Due to local elections, Northern Ireland delayed the effective date of their '2003' figures until 2 February 2004.

Parliamentary electors 1994 to 2003

Year of register[1]	Parliamentary electors
England	
1994	36,455,151
1995	36,544,929
1996	36,626,853
1997	36,806,467
1998	36,885,805
1999	36,947,525
2000	36,994,211
2001	37,296,327
2002	37,179,095
2003	36,972,519
Wales	
1994	2,222,091
1995	2,220,290
1996	2,217,893
1997	2,222,533
1998	2,230,452
1999	2,227,571
2000	2,232,474
2001	2,235,666
2002	2,225,599
2003	2,219,973
Scotland	
1994	3,947,157
1995	3,961,566
1996	3,963,072
1997	3,984,406
1998	3,992,502
1999	4,011,450
2000	3,992,034
2001	3,966,801
2002	3,887,059
2003	3,857,997
Northern Ireland	
1994	1,162,335
1995	1,169,423
1996	1,176,927
1997	1,190,198
1998	1,188,034
1999	1,202,339
2000	1,204,721
2001	1,196,970

Parliamentary electors 1994 to 2003

Year of register[1]	*Parliamentary electors*
2002	1,071,600
2003–04[1]	1,067,564

[1] Up to 2000 data are as at 16 February. From 2001 data are as 1 December, except Northern Ireland where '2003' data are in fact as at 2 February 2004.

Source:
Office for National Statistics

National Referendum

Rachel Squire: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the estimated cost is of holding a national referendum. [165134]

Mr. Leslie: No comparative figures are available as the only UK-wide referendum was held in 1975. We would expect the cost to be similar to the cost of a general election. The last General Election with a similar franchise cost approximately £80 million.

Organ Retention

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the procedure is by which relatives can obtain information on organ retention in cases following a coroner's post mortem. [164579]

Mr. Leslie: Currently in all coroners' cases in which it has proved necessary to retain organs, relatives are informed in writing.

Relatives also have the option of phoning the Human Organs Enquiry Line, which was established in November 2002 as recommended in the Northern Ireland Human Organ Inquiry Report. A direct enquiry can also be made to the Coroner who ordered the post-mortem examination.

Postal Voting

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what safeguards he is proposing to put in place to deter electoral fraud following the introduction of all postal voting. [165099]

Mr. Leslie: Postal voting has been available for many years and since 2000 has been available on demand. There are several safeguards in place for this, a Declaration of Identity as well as a variety of offences including personation and undue influence. For the all-postal pilots in June this year, the European Parliamentary and Local Elections (Pilots) Bill builds on existing sanctions, by extending the offence of personation to be an arrestable offence outside polling stations and also by allowing the time limit for investigating electoral offences to be extended, along with a range of practical measures, in partnership with electoral administrators and other key stakeholders, to address potential fraud. Returning Officers can perform checks, including random inspection of Declaration of Identities and the checking of signatures against those already on file or investigating where more than a certain number of ballot papers are sent to or redirected to one address. This is building on the experience gained during a series of successful pilots at local elections.

Review of Tribunals

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans he has to bring into effect in Northern Ireland the recommendations of the Leggatt Report on the Review of Tribunals. [164628]

Mr. Leslie: Sir Andrew Leggatt's report made a number of recommendations in relation to tribunal reform. The Government will issue its response to these recommendations set in the wider context of reforming the Administrative Justice System in a White Paper later this year. Consideration is currently being given to the implications of Sir Andrew Leggatt's Report for Northern Ireland.

Small Claims

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the principal categories of claim which are heard in the small claims track are. [164436]

Mr. Lammy: The categories of claims made in the small claims track for which the department collects certain information are debt, personal injury, other negligence and non-possession housing disputes.

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many claims for return of tenancy deposits were heard in the small claims track in 2002–03. [164437]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested is not collected centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost to the department.

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps his Department has taken to assess whether charging fees for the recovery of small claims in the small claims track has a deterrent effect on claimants. [164438]

Mr. Leslie: The first step when setting fees is to ensure that the size of the fee is proportionate to cost. This means that even the smallest claim attracts a fee of £30. The second step is to ensure (by means of claim bands) that fees are proportionate to the amount at stake. The third step is to provide protection for those unable to pay. Exemption is available for those on means tested benefits and discretionary remission (based on hardship) for those not qualifying. Finally, the successful litigant may recover his fee from the losing party.

If a litigant is deterred from issuing proceedings this is most likely to be because he is unsure of winning or because he is unsure that the losing party has the means to pay.

When court fees are increased there is always a consultation process. Consultation has shown that the probability of successful recovery is just as important to potential litigants as the size of fees. Relatively low fees are payable on defended small claims because the cost is

shared by those with claims that are not defended. The cost of undefended small claims is the concern of most claimants.

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will encourage the the small claims track to sit in neighbourhood premises to determine groups of local cases. [164440]

Mr. Lammy: Cases in the small claims track are heard throughout a network of 218 county courts across the country. The present arrangements for hearing cases in the small claims track are considered adequate to meet the needs of local and public interest and in providing access to justice.

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans he has for improving access for the socially excluded to the small claims track. [164441]

Mr. Lammy: One of our Departmental Public Service Agreement targets (PSA6) is to increase year-on-year the number of people who receive suitable assistance in the priority areas of law involving fundamental rights or social exclusion. We are increasing the capacity of the Community Legal Service and all advice and guidance services through closer co-operation and collaboration within the advice sector.

Access to justice is protected by automatic exemption of fees for litigants on specified means tested benefits and discretionary remission (in part or full) for those who do not benefit from exemption but would face exceptional hardship if required to pay fees, or required to pay them in full. There are no current plans to review this policy.

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many defendants in the small claims track defaulted on orders for money judgments in 2002–03; and how many such judgments were enforced by the court after defaults in that year. [164442]

Mr. Lammy: The department does not hold information centrally concerning defendants who default on money judgments in the small claims track, and it can be provided only at disproportionate cost. For information, figures for enforcement of judgments in 2002–03, irrespective of track, are contained in the table. These figures do not take into account whether or not they were issued because the defendant defaulted on a money judgment.

Enforcement proceedings	*2002–03*
Warrant of execution against goods issued	373,257
Third party debt orders issued	5,828
Charging order applications issued	32,117
Attachment of Earnings order-judgment debt	40,029

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to his Written Ministerial Statement of 22 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 41WS, what the mechanism will be by which magistrates courts will conduct blitzes against fine defaulters; and by what mechanism the efficacy of such blitzes will be evaluated. [164453]

Mr. Leslie: The national fines initiative referred to in my Written Ministerial Statement of 22 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 41WS, is Operation Payback National guidance was issued to assist courts in planning, but the scope and process of the local operations was determined by individual Justices' Chief Executives, according to local circumstances. Courts identified particular dates and areas for their action, and then, assisted by the police, concentrated all their enforcement resources in the targeted areas for the duration of their local operations.

The magistrates courts who have taken part in Operation Payback have been asked to provide a core set of data, including the number of warrants progressed, amount of money collected and the number of Civilian Enforcement Officers and police involved. This will allow us to assess the effectiveness of the Operation at both a national and regional level.

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the purpose is of charging fees for *(a)* applicants and *(b)* defendants in the Small Claims Court. [164454]

Mr. Lammy: Four fees may become payable during the course of a defended small claim. The fee on issue of the claim, the fee on a counterclaim, the fee on allocation to track, and the fee on making a specific application. In all cases the purpose of the fee is the same, namely to recover cost.

It would be administratively convenient to recover the extra cost of applications simply by increasing claim fees. However there is a danger that if applications did not attract fees the time of the court and the parties would be wasted by unnecessary applications.

A claimant who forces a defendant to make an application to the court by unreasonably refusing to hand over information risks having to pay the fee. A defendant who makes an unnecessary application is unlikely to recover the fee.

The charging of fees on applications therefore promotes co-operation between the parties and helps to ensure that the time of the court and the parties is not wasted by unnecessary applications.

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make the forms for application to the small claims track available in *(a)* citizens' advice bureaux and *(b)* other neighbourhood premises. [164455]

Mr. Lammy: Claim forms are available to the citizens' advice bureaux and all other advice agencies through any county court and via the Court Service website.

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the minimum number of trips to the small claims track is which an applicant must take to make a claim and recover judgment. [164456]

Mr. Lammy: It is possible for a claimant to make a small claim and recover judgment without having to attend court.

HEALTH

Access to Medical Notes

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will outline the position regarding access to medical notes by a patient's *(a)* next of kin and *(b)* other first degree relatives. [164919]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Access to health records of living patients is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. Where a patient is a competent adult, access should normally only be given with the patient's consent. Special provisions apply for adults who are incapacitated and for children. Where a patient has died, access to their record is governed by the Access to Health Records Act 1990. The Act provides the right for a deceased person's personal representative and any person with a claim arising out of the patient's death to apply for access.

Ambulance Staff

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health at what age ambulance personnel are able to retire on a full pension; and if he will make a statement. [165477]

Mr. Hutton: Ambulance staff who are members of the national health service pension scheme and have two years or more pensionable service can retire from employment in the NHS at age 60 with immediate payment of pension. Ambulance staff with 40 years pensionable service will receive a full pension equivalent to half their final year's pensionable pay.

Blood Transfusion

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the roles are of *(a)* his advisory committees, *(b)* the serious hazards of transfusion body and *(c)* the National Patient Safety Agency in reducing the risks associated with blood transfusion. [163474]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The expert advisory committee on the Microbiological Safety of Blood and Tissues for Transplantation (MSBT) is responsible for providing the Government with advice on blood safety issues.

The Serious Hazards of Transfusion (SHOT) reporting system has two main objectives: to collect data on serious adverse events involving the transfusion of blood components; and to make recommendations to improve transfusion safety, based on the analysis of the collected data. The national medical co-ordinator of SHOT is a member of MSBT.

The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) was established to improve the safety of national health service patient care by promoting an open and fair culture and by introducing a new national reporting and learning system for patient safety incidents. The reporting system is being implemented across the NHS during 2004.

The NPSA has worked with SHOT in establishing ways of reducing errors associated with bedside blood transfusions, in establishing the underlying causes of, and in identifying effective ways of collecting data on, these errors, to help ensure that they do not recur. The NPSA will be working with SHOT and others on establishing ways of preventing error, using interventions like bar-coding and tagging systems.

Cancer Services

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to improve the speed of access to radiography for cancer patients. [163996]

Miss Melanie Johnson: To reduce the amount of time patients have to wait for radiography, we are making major investment in replacement and additional scanners and linear accelerators, recruiting and training additional radiographers and streamlining care processes through the cancer services collaborative improvement partnership.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will implement all of the recommendations contained in the National Audit Office report "Tackling Cancer in England: Saving More Lives". [164235]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department welcomes the National Audit Office report, "Tackling Cancer in England: Saving More Lives", and will take the report's recommendations into account as we further develop and improve cancer services. The report will be discussed in detail at a Committee of Public Accounts hearing scheduled for 16 June 2004. Sir Nigel Crisp, chief executive of the national health service and Professor Mike Richards, national cancer director, have been called to give evidence at the hearing. The Government will respond to the Committee's subsequent report in the form of a Treasury minute.

Child Alcohol-Related Problems

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children aged between 11 and 15 years were admitted to hospital in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough owing to alcohol-related problems in each of the last six years. [162349]

Mr. Hutton: Figures are not available by London borough. The table shows data by health authority in the London area.

Primary diagnosis (ICD-10 F10, K70, T51) alcohol related illness. Age on admission 11–15 years. Region of treatment north and south Thames 1997–98 and 1998–99/London 1999–2000 to 2002–03 (see note below). Count of finished admission episodes by health authority of treatment. NHS hospitals, 1997–98 to 2002–03

Finished admission episodes Health authority of treatment	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
QA2 Hillingdon	37	29	12	10	15	8
QA3 Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster	17	8	8	10	10	15
QA4 Enfield and Haringey	17	10	*	*	—	—
QA5 Redbridge and Waltham Forest	9	14	7	7	10	8
QAA Bexley and Greenwich	16	14	29	20	—	—

Primary diagnosis (ICD-10 F10, K70, T51) alcohol related illness. Age on admission 11–15 years. Region of treatment north and south Thames 1997–98 and 1998–99/London 1999–2000 to 2002–03 (see note below). Count of finished admission episodes by health authority of treatment. NHS hospitals, 1997–98 to 2002–03

Finished admission episodes Health authority of treatment	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
QAC Bromley	8	7	*	*	—	—
QAD Croydon	12	17	12	17	19	13
QAG Kingston and Richmond	—	—	15	45	47	39
QAH Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham	40	18	23	15	20	32
QAJ Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth	73	53	58	56	58	67
QAP Barking and Havering	14	14	6	14	16	32
QAQ Barnet	10	7	40	43	—	—
QAR Brent and Harrow	16	13	17	23	16	8
QAT Camden and Islington	21	14	26	19	12	28
QAV Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow	7	16	19	13	23	23
QAW East London and The City	7	9	19	9	16	18
QEW Barnet Enfield and Haringey	—	—	—	—	28	38
QEY Bexley Bromley and Greenwich	—	—	—	—	19	27
Regional Total	304	243	297	310	309	356

Notes:
1. Figures are not available for Greater London and each London borough and so data based on health authority (HA) of treatment has been provided. Due to organisational changes, information is given for North Thames and South Thames regional offices in the 1997–98 and 1998–99 data years and the London regional office in the 1999–2000 to 2002–03 data years.
2. Since North and South Thames regions cover a greater area than the London region, HAs clearly outside of London have been omitted from this list (HA Codes QAE, QAF, QAK, QAL, QAM, QAN, QAX, QAY, QEP, QEQ).
3. Data has been derived for 2002–03 based on regions and HAs that existed in 2001–02. This is an attempt to provide continuity in the data provided, but caution should still be applied when looking at trends over time.
4. Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2001–02 and 2002–03, which are not yet adjusted for shortfalls.
5. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (7 prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
6. Due to reasons of confidentiality, figures between 1 and 5 have been suppressed and replaced with '*'

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

Chorley Hospital

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital *(a)* nurses and *(b)* doctors were victims of violence from patients in Chorley hospital in each of the last five years. [163772]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information is not collected on the identity of attackers. For information on the number of attacks on staff, I refer my hon. Friend to the response I gave him on 29 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1220–21W.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many consultants there were on average in the accident and emergency department in Chorley hospital in each of the last three years. [163733]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information is gathered on a trust basis. Information for the Chorley and South Ribble National health service Trust and the Preston Acute NHS Trust for 2001 and the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust for 2002 and 2003 is shown in the table.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS): Consultants with an accident and emergency specialty in the Chorley Area

England, as at 30 September	*Number (headcount) 2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust	3	—	—
Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	5	—	—
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	—	7	7

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

Community Hospitals

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has commissioned on the movement of NHS staff into and out of the community hospitals at *(a)* Townlands, *(b)* Wallingford, *(c)* Abingdon, *(d)* Wantage, *(e)* Watlington and *(f)* Didcot. [164100]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No research has been commissioned on the movement of national health service staff into and out of these community hospitals.

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the retention rate of staff was in the latest period for which figures are available at the community hospitals at *(a)* Townlands, *(b)* Wallingford, *(c)* Abingdon, *(d)* Wantage, *(e)* Watlington and *(f)* Didcot. [164104]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

Mr. Donaldson. To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans he has to provide funding for research on the treatment of Duchenne muscular dystrophy; [164345]

(2) what plans he has to ring-fence funding for Duchenne muscular dystrophy research; [164931]

(3) what amount will be spent on researching treatment for Duchenne muscular dystrophy over the next five years. [164932]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 29 March 2004]:* On 29 March 2004, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced that the researchers supported by the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign were successful in their bid for research funding. They have been awarded £1.6 million to fund research to underpin the development of a novel gene therapy treatment for Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

Ethical and Environmental Investment Policies

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 603W, on ethical and environmental investment policies, whether this information will be *(a)* automatically sent to the foundation hospital trusts and *(b)* sent on request. [164638]

Mr. Hutton: I refer my hon. Friend to my response of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 177W.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 603W, on ethical and environmental investment policies, if he will set minimum standards for the ethical and environmental investments. [164658]

Mr. Hutton: I refer my hon. Friend to my response of 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1410W.

Foundation Trusts (Governorship Elections)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to ensure that the membership is announced in advance of any foundation trust governorship election; and what guidance he is providing to trusts on this matter. [R] [164033]

Mr. Hutton: The Public Benefit Corporation (Register of Members) Regulations 2004 were laid in Parliament on 5 March 2004. Subject to Parliamentary approval, they come into force on 1 April 2004 and set out how trusts should maintain registers of members once they have been authorised by the regulator. Registers are to be made public other than in the circumstances set out in the Regulations. The obligation to keep a public register of members only arises once a National health service trust receives an authorisation from the independent regulator to be a NHS foundation trust. Guidance on interpretation of the Regulations has been provided to all NHS trusts applying for NHS foundation trust status.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the timetable is for forthcoming elections to the boards of governors of foundation trusts. [R] [164034]

Mr. Hutton: The timetable for elections to the board of governors is a matter for each applicant national health service trust. The Department has issued model rules and guidance and these are available in the Library. The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 provides for the commencement of elections once a trust has made an application to the regulator. The independent regulator is responsible for ensuring that a NHS foundation trust's constitution, including its provisions for carrying out elections, is in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

General Medical Services Contract

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the quality and outcomes framework of the General Medical Services contract will be subject to review. [164900]

Mr. Hutton: An independent, United Kingdom-wide review group will be established by the end of this year and will review the quality and outcomes framework (QOF) from then. This will be an ongoing process. Any changes to the QOF of the new general medical services contract will be negotiated and agreed between the NHS Confederation and the British Medical Association.

General Practitioners

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners per head of population there were in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* England in each year since 1997. [162917]

Mr. Hutton: The Department collects figures by primary care trust (PCT) only, not by constituency. The number of unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPE) per head of population in South Tyneside PCT and primary care group (PCG) since 1999 and in Tyne and Wear, the North East and England since 1997 are shown in the table.

Unrestricted Principals and Equivalents [1] (UPEs) per 100,000 patients for England, South Tyneside PCG/PCT, Tyne and Wear and the North East

Number (headcount)							
North East	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
England	53	54	54	54	54	54	55
South Tyneside PCG	n/a	n/a	51	51	n/a	n/a	n/a
South Tyneside PCT	—	—	—	—	52	52	52
Tyne and Wear [2]	53	53	54	55	57	59	61
North East	53	53	54	55	56	57	59

n/a = not available.

[1] Unrestricted Principals and Equivalents (UPEs) includes GMS Unrestricted Principals and Equivalents, PMS Contracted GPs and PMS Salaried GPs.

[2] The first PCTs were established in 2001, data previous to this was collected by health authorities figures for South Tyneside PCG appear comparable to South Tyneside PCT.

Sources:

Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of patients were offered a first appointment with a general practitioner within two working days in *(a)* Crosby and *(b)* England in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [164360]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Data on the availability of appointments to see a general practitioner has been collected since September 2001. Since then, there has been great progress in offering patients the opportunity to see a GP quickly and the overwhelming majority of patients (nationally 96 per cent. at January 2004) can now see a GP within two working days. Data for England, for South Sefton and Southport and Formby primary care trusts (PCTs) and for the former Sefton Health Authority (HA) are shown in the table.

Percentage of patients being offered an appointment with a GP within 48 hours

	England	*South Sefton PCT*	*Southport and Formby PCT*
January 2004	96.4	90.0	100.0
March 2003	88.2	90.4	100.0
1 March 2002[1]	74.6	78.0	[2]—
September 2001[1]	80.1	67.0	[2]—

[1] Data collected between September 2001 and March 2002 are based on the percentage of practices, not patients and are not strictly comparable but are included here for completeness.
[2] Sefton HA results cover both PCTs.

Health Promotion England

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 15 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 856W, on Health Promotion England, what happened to the underspends. [159128]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Health Promotion England was funded from the Department's central budget programme in 2000–01 and 2001–02. Typically, underspends from individual budgets within the programme would have been available for redeployment across the remainder of the central budget programme.

The fact that individual budgets within the overall central budget programme show underspends or overspends against individual allocations is not significant. The large central revenue programmes are managed, controlled and reconciled through the use of overall budget envelopes rather than on a specific budget or area basis.

Health Visitors

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the vacancy rates were for health visitors in Greater London, broken down by health trust, for each year since 1997. [164059]

Mr. Hutton: Information on three-month vacancy rates is only available from 1999 and has been placed in the Library.

Isolation Facilities

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 12 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1819W, on Healthcare Associated Infections (Deaths), what monitoring his Department will undertake of the provision of isolation facilities in NHS hospitals and the timetable for their implementation. [162434]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Progress on provision of isolation facilities is one of the actions that the strategic health authorities will monitor and the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection will also assess progress as part of the new performance indicator, "Winning Ways—processes and procedures".

Mental Health Services

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of *(a)* psychiatrists, *(b)* nurses and *(c)* other staff groups working in mental health services are from an ethnic minority group in each strategic health authority area of England. [163561]

Mr. Hutton: The information is shown in the table.

NHS hospital and community health services: Total ethnic minority groups1 of doctors in the psychiatry group, qualified nursing and qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical staff within the specified areas by Strategic Health Authority area in England as at 30 September 2003

Percentage

	All doctors in the psychiatry group	*Qualified nursing staff*		
		Consultants	*All qualified nurses in mental health*	*Community psychiatry*
England	37.6	22.0	18.6	15.2
Q01 Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire SNA	37.4	20.3	8.9	8.7
Q02 Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA	56.9	38.9	40.8	40.0
Q03 Essex SHA	57.7	34.3	23.4	15.8
Q04 North West London SHA	43.0	20.4	57.7	47.5
Q05 North Central London SHA	26.2	10.8	57.0	53.4
Q06 North East London SHA	40.2	23.1	60.0	45.7
Q07 South East London SHA	33.4	21.8	53.2	48.5
Q08 South West London SHA	37.8	19.2	55.9	51.3
Q09 Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA	23.8	13.3	1.3	2.0
Q10 County Durham and Tees Valley SHA	26.5	23.8	1.1	2.2
Q11 North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA	26.3	6.5	1.5	1.4
Q12 West Yorkshire SHA	37.6	17.6	8.7	7.1
Q13 Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	39.7	21.5	2.7	1.4
Q14 Greater Manchester SHA	36.7	20.0	10.2	10.3

NHS hospital and community health services: Total ethnic minority groups[1] of doctors in the psychiatry group, qualified nursing and qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical staff within the specified areas by Strategic Health Authority area in England as at 30 September 2003

Percentage

	All doctors in the psychiatry group	*Qualified nursing staff*		
		Consultants	*All qualified nurses in mental health*	*Community psychiatry*
England	39.1	21.0	5.2	4.0
Q15 Cheshire and Merseyside SHA	32.3	17.0	21.6	14.4
Q16 Thames Valley SHA	23.1	10.0	7.6	5.4
Q17 Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA	55.1	34.7	21.0	16.3
Q18 Kent and Medway SHA	43.0	34.6	31.1	17.2
Q19 Surrey and Sussex SHA	18.3	8.0	7.9	5.8
Q20 Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire SHA	13.9	4.9	1.0	0.7
Q21 South West Peninsula SHA	17.4	12.5	6.2	1.8
Q22 Dorset and Somerset SHA	43.8	30.8	4.9	3.3
Q23 South Yorkshire SHA	36.7	20.0	7.5	8.8
Q24 Trent SHA	49.6	36.6	15.7	16.3
Q25 Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland SHA	45.9	20.0	2.9	1.6
Q26 Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA	60.7	45.5	23.0	16.0
Q27 Birmingham and The Black Country SHA	48.7	32.5	10.3	5.3
Q28 West Midlands South SHA				

	Qualified nursing staff			*Qualified STT*	
	Other psychiatry	*Community learning disabilities*	*Other learning disabilities*	*Clinical psychology staff*	*Psychotherapy staff*
England	22.0	9.6	14.5	7.4	8.1
Q01 Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire SNA	9.7	6.9	6.1	3.3	0.0
Q02 Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA	54.0	36.2	13.9	8.9	7.1
Q03 Essex SHA	30.0	11.1	27.0	10.0	7.7
Q04 North West London SHA	59.9	46.3	75.0	14.1	13.1
Q05 North Central London SHA	59.2	23.5	50.8	16.4	9.6
Q06 North East London SHA	68.2	51.1	74.2	17.0	14.3
Q07 South East London SHA	57.1	29.3	52.4	16.0	19.2
Q08 South West London SHA	59.6	20.8	50.5	9.2	4.4
Q09 Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA	1.4	0.0	0.9	1.1	0.0
Q10 County Durham and Tees Valley SHA	0.9	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0
Q11 North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA	1.3	1.0	4.0	3.7	0.0
Q12 West Yorkshire SHA	10.9	2.0	5.7	4.4	6.9
Q13 Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	3.8	1.3	2.5	7.0	0.0
Q14 Greater Manchester SHA	11.5	2.8	2.3	3.4	0.0
Q15 Cheshire and Merseyside SHA	5.7	4.4	5.5	4.3	0.0
Q16 Thames Valley SHA	27.1	13.6	15.2	3.9	0.0
Q17 Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA	9.1	3.7	8.1	1.9	9.1
Q18 Kent and Medway SHA	25.3	11.3	21.3	3.9	3.3
Q19 Surrey and Sussex SHA	34.3	22.6	49.5	5.7	5.1
Q20 Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire SHA	9.3	2.6	6.9	2.0	0.0
Q21 South West Peninsula SHA	1.4	0.0	0.5	2.1	0.0
Q22 Dorset and Somerset SHA	8.1	0.0	9.5	4.7	0.0
Q23 South Yorkshire SHA	5.3	12.9	2.0	3.2	5.9
Q24 Trent SHA	7.5	4.0	7.0	5.2	11.5
Q25 Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland SHA	19.7	0.0	8.7	8.9	8.3
Q26 Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA	3.8	1.7	6.2	2.8	0.0
Q27 Birmingham and The Black Country SHA	25.2	20.3	27.8	14.3	11.1
Q28 West Midlands South SHA	14.3	6.4	12.4	5.4	0.0

[1] Percentages are calculated on staff whose ethnic group is known and are based on staff expressed as a headcount.

Source:
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census.

MRSA Bacterium

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many strains of the MRSA bacterium have been isolated. [163761]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The total number of strains is not known, but the Health Protection Agency receives around 7,000 methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) strains a year for typing on a voluntary basis to assist in the investigation of serious disease and outbreak investigation and control. Most hospital outbreaks in the United Kingdom are due to "epidemic" strains of MRSA, which can spread from person to person. A total of 17 epidemic strains have been identified in the UK to date and two strains, EMRSA 15 and EMRSA 16, predominate.

National Care Standards Commission

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost of setting up the National Care Standards Commission was. [163668]

Dr. Ladyman: Fixed assets were acquired for the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) by the Department during 2001–02 and those were transferred into the accounts of the NCSC from 1 April 2002 at a transfer value of £44.943 million. The programme revenue spend on setting the NCSC up was £4.665 million. In addition, the cost of civil servants working on setting the Commission up was £1.423 million. When the NCSC was abolished on 1 April 2004, its assets were transferred to the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection, which took over the regulation of social and independent healthcare, respectively, on that day.

Dentistry

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he intends to take to deal with shortages of NHS dentists in Gloucestershire; and if he will make a statement on NHS dentistry in Gloucestershire. [159043]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have provided new investment totalling £90 million to national health service dentistry over the last year. £59 million will support access, and strategic health authorities (SHAs) have been advised of their shares and are working with their primary care trusts (PCTs), including those in Gloucestershire, to address access issues. £30 million is to support information technology and the balance of £1 million will support organisational development locally.

In Gloucestershire, the existing dental access centres offer emergency and routine dental treatment—this is prioritised according to patients' needs and the demands placed on the service.

All the PCTs in Gloucestershire have been invited by Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire SHA to submit proposals to improve access to dental care, funded through the SHA's £2 million share of the access funding. They are also exploring the possibility of establishing an outreach-teaching pilot for dental and dental therapy students with Bristol University.

West Gloucestershire PCT is one of the 16 PCTs in England with which the shadow NHS dentistry support team is working. The support team has made several visits to Gloucestershire towards the end of 2003, and an action plan to establish new dental practices in Cinderford, in the Forest of Dean, and Gloucester City will be agreed by the end of April 2004. Additionally, work is under way to explore the potential for overseas recruitment in Gloucestershire.

Cheltenham and Tewkesbury and Cotswold and Vale PCTs are taking similar action, and are inviting all dental practices to participate and submit proposals for use of the extra resources available in 2004–05.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to *(a)* support and *(b)* promote NHS dentistry in Chorley. [157088]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Over the past two years, Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust (PCT) has invested an additional £90,000 in capital development and equipment for dental practices in return for a specific undertaking from the relevant practices to increase national health service registrations. Additionally, the PCT has increased the number of people working in personal dental services in the area and invested additional capital funding to enable the existing community dental service premises to provide an additional dental surgery. The PCT is currently developing a dental action plan which will further promote NHS dentistry in Chorley and South Ribble.

Nationally, we have provided new investment totalling £90 million to NHS dentistry over the last year. £59 million will support access, and strategic health authorities have been advised of their shares and are working with their PCTs, including Chorley and South Ribble, to address access issues. £30 million is to support information technology and the balance of £1 million will support organisational development locally.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what proposals his Department has to increase the number of dentists in training; and if he will make a statement; [165209]

(2) what representations he has received regarding shortages of NHS dentists; and if he will make a statement. [165210]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have been undertaking the first dental workforce review since 1987, in which stakeholders, including representatives of strategic health authorities, dental schools, and the British Dental Association participated and gave their views. We will be publishing the report shortly. We are also currently reviewing the number of undergraduate places in dentistry in the context of the current Government Spending Review.

NHS Trust Boards

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether it is his policy that NHS trust board meetings should be open to the public; and what guidance he issues on circumstances under which meetings may be held in private. [164613]

Mr. Hutton: All national health service trust board meetings should normally be held in public, under the terms of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. Guidance on the circumstances in which boards may go into closed sessions is contained in Health Service Circular 1998/207, a copy of which is available in the Library.

NHS University

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made with the NHS University project; how much money has been allocated to the NHS University project in each of the last three financial years; and who the executive postholders of the NHS University project are. [163522]

Mr. Hutton: NHSU has moved through a number of stages of development. It has consulted widely across the national health service and social care on its development plan, "Learning for Everyone", the results

of which fed into NHSU's first strategic plan, launched in December 2003. At this point NHSU was officially constituted as a special health authority.

NHSU has also been piloting and launching a range of programmes—including an induction programme. "Working for the NHS and First Contact", a programme that equips nurses and other healthcare professionals to act as the first point of contact for patients. NHSU has also launched its telephone helpline service for learning opportunities for staff (Ui).

NHSU received its first allocation of £10 million in 2002–03. A further allocation of £30 million was made in 2003–04.

The chief executive and vice chancellor designate of NHSU is Professor Bob Fryer CBE. NHSU has three group directors; Neil Johnson (director of learning programmes and services), Derek Grover (director of distributed learning) and Jeffrey Defries (director of corporate services). Sue Eggleton is director of resources and planning.

Out-of-Hours Services

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what new resources *(a)* were budgeted for and *(b)* will be made available to primary care trusts specifically to help them meet their obligations to provide out-of-hours services. [162261]

Mr. Hutton: Additional resources of £110 million over three years from 2003–04 have been announced to help fund primary care trust (PCT) re-provision of out-of-hours services. The £110 million is in addition to the average of about £6,000 that will be released for each general practitioner who opts out—or some £180 million if all GPs opt out.

A further £28 million (across 2004–05 and 2005–06) is being made available for those PCTs facing the biggest challenges in developing their out-of-hours services; plus up to an additional £30 million in incentive payments will be allocated in 2004–05 to reward them for the planning and delivery of a high quality, sustainable service.

Public Health

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much his Department has spent on advertising of the dangers of *(a)* smoking, *(b)* poor diet and *(c)* alcohol in each year since 1997. [158219]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Prior to 1999–2000 the Health Education Authority ran the public education campaign on the dangers of smoking. The Department of Health took over this work in December 1999.

The figures in the table show advertising expenditure on the dangers of smoking from 1999–2000 to date.

	Expenditure (£ million)
1999–2000	6.18
2000–01	8.97
2001–02	7.79
2002–03	7.88
2003–04	17.76

There has been no expenditure by the Department on advertising the dangers of poor diet or alcohol during this period.

However, the Department is taking action to ensure that people have access to healthy diets. In 2002–03, funding for the Department of Health-led programmes aimed at improving children's diet totalled £140.98 million and the Food Standards Agency has provided £0.58 million. An additional £9.83 million has been provided to support a range of projects, including community based programmes.

In addition to the above, local nutrition initiatives are funded through health action zones, sure start, healthy living centres and through general funding allocations to health authorities and primary care trusts, on which information is not collected centrally. The Department has also funded health promotion work in these areas from centrally held budgets, including campaign literature, helpline and website advice. Local national health service agencies are responsible for local health promotion work. The funds they spend on this work form part of their general budgets and no breakdown of these funds is centrally available.

The Government's alcohol harm reduction strategy for England was published on 15 March 2004. It contains recommendations for action to improve Government communications on alcohol misuse, including the ways in which the Government inform the public of the dangers of alcohol misuse. The Department will be leading the work on taking these recommendations forward.

Semiconductor Industry (Cancer)

Norman Baker To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment he has made of the incidence of cancer among workers within the semiconductor industry. [163971]

Mr. Browne: I have been asked to reply.

In December 2001, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) published a report that set out the findings of a study into the cancer incidence and mortality of current and former workers at the National Semiconductor plant in Greenock. As a result of that investigation, HSE has developed a specification for further investigation of the findings at Greenock which it is discussing with the company and its workforce. The HSE has also established a feasibility study to investigate whether an industry-wide study can be undertaken.

Skin Disease

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans his Department has to add inflammatory skin diseases to the quality and outcomes framework of the General Medical Services contract. [164905]

Mr. Hutton: Changes to the quality and outcomes framework (QOF) of the new general medical services contract will be negotiated between the NHS Confederation and the British Medical Association, following recommendations from an independent,

United Kingdom-wide review group. The independent review group will decide what disease areas to consider for addition to the QOF.

Smoking

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the evaluation being carried out by the NHS to verify whether those who stop smoking through the NHS stop smoking services have managed to remain non-smokers will be *(a)* completed and *(b)* published. [164231]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department has funded an evaluation of the national health service stop smoking services programme, which is being carried out by a team led by Glasgow University.

The pilot study fieldwork is now complete and the research team which undertook the evaluation is currently writing up its findings. These will be published later this year.

Speech Therapy

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many school-age children were receiving speech therapy in each of the primary care trust areas in Greater London in each year since 1997 in the *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary sector; [164175]

(2) how many pre-school children were receiving speech therapy in each of the primary care trust areas in Greater London in each year since 1997. [164176]

Mr. Hutton: Information is not available in the form requested. Information about children receiving speech therapy is available by service provider and not by primary care trust area, and does not distinguish primary from secondary sector provision. The available data for 2002–03 are shown in the table. Information for earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Initial contacts (new episodes of care) with speech therapy services, by age and trust, London 2002–03

Strategic Health Authority/Provider Trust	*Trust type*	*Age 0–4*	*5–15*
London		17,100	16,520
North Central London		3,420	3,790
Barnet	PCT	590	920
Enfield	PCT	320	440
Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children	NHST	580	420
Haringey	PCT	620	880
Islington	PCT	1,310	1,130
Royal Free Hampstead	NHST	0	10
University College London Hospitals	NHST	0	0
North East London		4,030	2,600
Barking and Dagenham	PCT	750	450
Barts and The London	NHST	130	60
City and Hackney	PCT	580	0
Homerton Hospital	NHST	0	0
Newham	PCT	890	1,220
Redbridge	PCT	340	160
Tower Hamlets	PCT	740	450
Walthamstow, Leyton and Leytonstone	PCT	600	260
North West London		2,670	1,580
Brent	PCT	390	380
Central and NW London Mental Health	NHST	0	0
Ealing	PCT	580	250
Hammersmith and Fulham	PCT	260	120
Hammersmith Hospitals	NHST	120	80
Harrow	PCT	0	0
Hillingdon	PCT	220	120
Hillingdon Hospital	NHST	0	40
Hounslow	PCT	200	130
Kensington and Chelsea	PCT	90	50
North West London	NHST	510	240
Royal Marsden	NHST	0	10
St. Mary's	NHST	150	40
West London Mental Health	NHST	0	0
Westminster	PCT	140	110
South East London		3,760	4,000
Bromley	PCT	750	290
Greenwich	PCT	520	250
Guy's and St.Thomas' Hospital	NHST	0	0
King's College Hospital	NHST	40	20
Lambeth	PCT	750	1,210
Lewisham	PCT	590	950
Oxleas	NHST	470	270
Queen Elizabeth Hospital	NHST	0	0
South London and Maudsley	NHST	0	0
Southwark	PCT	630	1,020
South west London		3,230	4,560
Croydon	PCT	700	1,210
Kingston	PCT	300	250
SW London and St. George's Mental Health	NHST	0	0
Sutton and Merton	PCT	1,200	1,780
Wandsworth	PCT	1,030	1,320

Notes:
1. All trusts that provide speech therapy services are shown; some may provide services principally for adults.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10; 0 means fewer than 5 cases in the year.

Source:
DH Statistics Division; return KT29.

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many pre-school children were diagnosed as needing speech therapy in each of the primary care trust areas in Greater London in each year since 1997; [164177]

(2) how many school-age children were diagnosed as needing speech therapy in each of the primary care trust areas in Greater London in each year since 1997 in the *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary sector. [164178]

Mr. Hutton: No data are held centrally about the number of school-age children diagnosed as needing speech therapy.

St. Jude Silzone Heart Valve

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information and statistics he has collated about complications experienced by recipients of the St. Jude Silzone heart valve; and if he will make a statement. [163193]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) receives reports of adverse incidents involving medical devices, including heart valves, though a voluntary user

reporting system and mandatory manufacturer vigilance reporting system as required by the Medical Devices Directive. Information on deaths and valve explantations is also collected by the UK Heart Valve Registry and is made available to clinicians.

Approximately 1,300 Silzone* mechanical heart valves were distributed in the United Kingdom between its introduction in 1997 and its withdrawal from use in January 2000. The main problems associated with Silzone* heart valves were increased risk of blood clotting complications, such as stroke, and leakage around the valve. The MHRA was originally alerted to this problem by a report of seven incidents of such complications among a series of 51 patients implanted with Silzone heart valves at one UK centre. The MHRA has since received only a small number of reports associated with the Silzone* valve. A clinical study sponsored by the manufacturer, St. Jude Medical, confirmed the MHRA's finding that the risk of complications was higher with this valve than in valves without the Silzone* coating, but showed that the increased risk occurred only in the first few months after implantation. Consequently, patients who remain implanted with this valve are now at no greater risk from complications than recipients of uncoated valves.

Suicide Bereavement

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has conducted into the costs and benefits of establishing a national suicide bereavement response strategy. [164896]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has commissioned the York Centre for reviews and dissemination to undertake a review of evidence regarding interventions to help people bereaved by suicide. The review is due to report its findings in summer 2004 and will support implementation of objective 2.8 of the national suicide prevention strategy for England.

Tuberculosis

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new cases of TB were reported in England in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by health authority. [161142]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* The number of tuberculosis cases, reported by strategic health authority (SHA) in England 2001 through enhanced TB surveillance, is shown in the table.

SHA	*TB cases reported*
Birmingham and Black Country	535
Shropshire and Staffordshire	40
West Midlands South	104
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	417
Trent	178
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	165
Essex	72
Norfolk Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	83
South Yorkshire	135
West Yorkshire	352
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	59
Northumberland Tyne and Wear	101
County Durham and Tees Valley	61
Greater Manchester	381
Cumbria and Lancashire	177
Cheshire and Merseyside	93
North East London	628
North Central London	505
South East London	414
South West London	235
North West London	940
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	60
Thames Valley	191
Surrey and Sussex	119
Kent and Medway	74
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	108
South West Peninsula	60
Dorset and Somerset	42

Note:
85 cases could not be matched from local authority data to SHA data.

TREASURY

World Debt

14. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Chancellor of Exchequer, if he will make a statement on his policy towards the cancellation of debt in the world's poorest countries. [164994]

John Healey: The UK Government continues to be absolutely committed to the rapid and full implementation of the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative—to ensuring that it delivers as much debt relief as possible under the current framework.

The UK goes even further than is required under the HIPC initiative and is committed to providing 100 per cent. debt relief to eligible HIPC countries.

But we must ensure that the HIPC initiative is completed, that topping up is provided where necessary for countries to achieve the 150 per cent. debt-to-export ratio, that it is fully funded, and that it has wide participation.

However, debt relief alone is not sufficient. All HIPC countries will need additional aid to meet the MDGS. That is why the UK's proposal for an International finance facility (IFF) is so important. it can provide the much-needed substantial increase in resources—in the form of grants, concessional loans, or further debt relief—needed to attain the MDGS.

18. **Mrs. Betty Williams**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his policy towards the cancellation of debt in the world's poorest countries. [164998]

Mr. Boateng : The UK Government continues to be absolutely committed to the rapid and full implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and to ensuring that it delivers as much debt relief as possible, to as many eligible countries as possible, under the current framework.

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his policy towards the cancellation of debt in the world's poorest countries. [164982]

Mr. Gordon Brown: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for South Swindon (Ms Drown) earlier today.

Millennium Development Goals

15. **Mr. David Stewart:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with other Ministers on financing the Millennium Development Goals. [164995]

John Healey: The Chancellor discussed the UK our proposal for an international finance facility with G7 colleagues at their recent meeting in Boca Raton.

The proposal will be considered in detail during the 8 April Ministerial forum on financing for Development in Paris, which the Chancellor will co-chair with the French Finance Minister.

Employment (North-east)

16. **Mr. Kevan Jones**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on progress with his aim to achieve full employment in the north-east. [164996]

Mr. Boateng: Employment has risen in every region since 1997, and in the north-east the employment rate now stands at 69.6 per cent.

Gershon Review

17. **Mr. Swire**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with Sir Peter Gershon regarding the total savings in public sector employment within the Department for Transport as a result of his efficiency review. [164997]

Mr. Boateng: The Department for Transport is working closely with Sir Peter Gershon and other key stakeholders to develop efficiency proposals for consideration in the 2004 Spending Review. Details of all departments' agreed efficiency programmes will be published alongside the Spending Review.

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made in implementing the interim proposals of the Gershon Review since his announcement in the Budget. [165018]

Mr. Boateng: I can now give more details of the specifics of reductions at Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise.

Of the 14,000 job reductions by 2007–08 in the new tax department, 8,000 will be made by Inland Revenue, 3,000 by HM Customs and Excise and 3,000 will result from the merger.

Ministers have met all the relevant trades unions. And yesterday the Chancellor met the TUC general council.

As the Chancellor announced, following the Lyons review, of the 27,000 public sector jobs to be moved out of London and the south east, 7,000 will not be replaced.

National Insurance

19. **Paul Flynn** : To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the expected cost to the National Insurance Fund is in 2003–04 of reductions in contributions by employers to compensate them for the cost of environmental taxes. [164999]

Dawn Primarolo: In 2003–04 the climate change levy is expected to raise £0.8 billion. The deduction in contributions to the National Insurance Fund for 2003–04 to Compensate for the Climate Change levy is around £1.2 billion.

In 2003–04 the aggregates levy is expected to raise £0.3 billion. The deduction in contributions to the National Insurance Fund for 2003–04 to Compensate for the aggregates levy is around £0.4 billion.

It is not possible to calculate the effect of the reduction in employer NICs in respect of landfill tax due to the structural changes to secondary NICs in 1999.

Energy Efficiency

20. **Mr. Chaytor**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what fiscal measures he plans to introduce to encourage energy efficiency; and if he will make a statement. [165000]

John Healey: The Energy White Paper identified the efficient use of energy as the most cost-effective way to meet the Government's four energy goals f reducing carbon emissions; ensuring security of supply; maintaining Competitiveness; and tackling fuel poverty. The Government have already made significant progress in encouraging energy efficiency, and the Climate Change levy and the EU emissions trading scheme both have a key role in this.

Budget 2004 also announced further use of economic instruments for domestic energy efficiency, including a landlord's energy saving allowance, and a 5 per cent. reduced rate of VAT for the domestic installation of ground source heat pumps.

Disabled People

21. **Mr. Goodman**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations in relation to the Inland Revenue he has received from groups representing people with disabilities. [165001]

Dawn Primarolo: Treasury Ministers receive a range of representations in relation to the Inland Revenue, including from groups representing people with disabilities.

Landfill Levy

22. **Dr. Whitehead**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to recycle the proceeds of the landfill levy. [165002]

John Healey: The Government have confirmed that the announced increases in landfill tax will be recycled to businesses and local authorities. We have been developing ideas on recycling the extra revenue to business through close working with stakeholders. We also commissioned independent research that was published in February: "An assessment of options for

recycling landfill tax revenue", available from the Treasury website. Budget 2004 has also announced that the Government are examining in detail a number of options and that consultations with stakeholders are continuing.

The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme (LTCS) has also been reformed. The value of the LTCS has been revalorised so that for 2004–05 it is worth £48.3 million. The Government have improved the LTCS following consultation with stakeholders so that its scope has been expanded to cover projects that conserve or promote biodiversity in natural habitats, providing more choice and increased support for species and habitats in the vicinity of landfill sites; and the administration of the scheme has been streamlined to provide greater transparency and accountability. There is also a fast track application system for small grants.

Global Fund

23. **Mr. Sarwar**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his plans to increase the UK's contribution to the Global Fund. [165003]

John Healey: Funding for the Global Fund comes from the Budget of the Department for International Development, and is a matter for my hon. Friend , the Secretary of State for International Development. He has given £75 million so far, and has pledged a further £63 million to 2006 and a further US $80 million through to 2008.

The Department for International Development works in close collaboration with the Global Fund to ensure its maximum effectiveness. Good outcomes will encourage DFID, and other, to look at the possibility of increasing support to the fund.

Heroin Smuggling

24. **David Cairns**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps HM Customs and Excise has taken to prepare for the expected increase in the flow of heroin from Afghanistan. [165004]

John Healey: The Government continues to monitor the drugs situation in Afghanistan. HM Customs and Excise will be providing further assistance to the Counter Narcotics Police (CNP) in Afghanistan and UK Customs officers deliver training to the Afghan Police Academy. Customs also work closely with countries neighbouring Afghanistan to improve the drug interdiction capability of these key countries.

Civil Servants (Relocation)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what analysis Sir Michael Lyons undertook on *(a)* the premises cost and *(b)* the employment cost of Government departments located in (i) the South East and (ii) Hampshire. [165049]

Mr. Boateng: The analysis of property and employment costs in the South East is set out in Chapter 3 of Sir Michael Lyons' report, "Well Placed to Deliver?—Shaping the Pattern of Government Service", published on 15 March.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment he has made of the proposals in the Lyons Report for the relocation of civil servants away from London and the South East on the house building targets proposed by the Barker Report; [165317]

(2) what assessment Sir Michael Lyons made of the impact on local employment markets of the relocation of Civil Service jobs to South West England and South Wales. [165320]

Mr. Boateng: This is a matter for departments' detailed business planning which they will be taking forward as part of the 2004 Spending Review.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the economic impact on the South Hampshire Priority Area for Economic Regeneration of the proposed relocation of Office for National Statistics staff from Titchfield. [165318]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Peter Walton to Mr. Mark Hoban, dated 1 April 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on what assessment has been made of the economic impact on the South Hampshire Priority Area for Economic Regeneration of the proposed relocation of Office of National Statistics staff from Titchfield. I am replying in his absence. (165318)

The impact of the proposed relocation will be a factor taken into account in the 2004 Spending Review.

Civil Service

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many members of the Senior Civil Service serve in *(a)* Inland Revenue, *(b)* head office functions of Inland Revenue, *(c)* the Large Business Office (CT), *(d)* International Division and *(e)* Special Compliance Office; and what proportion of them in each case are subject to performance-related pay arrangements. [152232]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of members of the Senior Civil Service (SCS) currently serving in *(a)* Inland Revenue is 292, *(b)* Head Office functions of Inland Revenue is 170, *(c)* the Large Business Office is 66, *(d)* International Division is 19, and *(e)* Special Compliance Office is 4. All members of the SCS are subject to performance related pay arrangements.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of redundancy costs arising from the reduction of 40,500 Civil Service jobs; and if he will make a statement. [163856]

Mr. Boateng: The Government is in discussions with the trade unions about civil service staff reductions through natural wastage and redeployment as well as redundancy. I will report further to the house on necessary costs arising from redundancy.

Close Company Dividends

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to levy national insurance contributions on close company dividends; and if he will make a statement. [161524]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 15 March 2004]:* The Budget made no proposals along these lines.

Correspondence

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letters of 20 November 2003 and 14 January 2004 from the hon. Member for Hull, North on the partial exemption method and the T element for universities. [163961]

John Healey: I have done so.

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to reply to the letter to him of 20 February from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire. [165131]

John Healey: There is no record of the correspondence being received at the Treasury. A copy has been requested and will be dealt with as soon as possible.

Debt Relief

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much of the extra funding for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries fund for top-up debt relief which the G8 committed at their meeting in Canada in 2002 has been provided. [158575]

John Healey: At the G8 summit in Kananaskis in 2002, donors pledged additional resources for the HIPC Trust Fund. The Trust Fund is administered by the World Bank and provides financial support to regional and sub-regional creditors—for example, the African Development Bank—enabling them to provide their share of debt relief commitments under the HIPC Initiative without endangering their lending capacity.

The pledges from 2002 currently amount to US $928 million. Total paid-in contributions up to January 2004 from old and new pledges to the HIPC Trust Fund amount to around $2.8 billion, of which $306 million is based on the pledges made in Kananaskis in 2002.

Departmental Buildings (Asbestos)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the buildings occupied by staff of *(a)* his Department and *(b)* agencies which require (i) remedial work on, and (ii) removal of, asbestos; what that work will cost; and what budgets are available for (A) this work and (B) further asbestos surveys in (1) 2004 and (2) 2005. [159351]

Ruth Kelly: The information regarding those of the Chancellor's Departments affected is set out below. Information on buildings identified as containing asbestos was placed in the Library of the House in response to a question from the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable) in July 2003, *Official Report*, column 301W.

The majority of those buildings housing staff from the Inland Revenue, Customs and Excise and the Valuation Office have been owned by Mapeley Ltd. under the STEPS contract since April 2001. Mapeley have responsibility under the contract to manage the STEPS estate in respect of the new Asbestos Regulations. The costs of any works and surveys associated with asbestos will therefore be met by them.

Six buildings on the Royal Mint site are affected. An external study, costing up to £1,500, will be undertaken this year to review further the existing control systems, and to determine what work may be required to comply with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. No specific budget has been earmarked for this work as costs will be covered by the general budget provisions for building maintenance.

In the Office for National Statistics all remedial or removal work identified in earlier asbestos surveys has been carried out. New surveys and management plans are being completed, at a cost of £81,000, and will identify any further work required.

A recent survey in the Office of Government Commerce has revealed asbestos at the Edinburgh office. A further survey is being carried out to determine the best means of treatment, and the cost. These costs will be met from normal estates and maintenance budgets.

Departmental Communications

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many staff are employed in the Department to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others; [158153]

(2) what the total expenditure on communications for the Department has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communications Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers.(ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158204]

Ruth Kelly: The Treasury currently employs nine press officers to work on communications, of which seven are GIGS staff, and one Special Adviser, and thirteen other members of staff to work on Treasury publications, managing the Treasury's external website, and related administration.

The total expenditure for these staff to date in 2003–04 is set out in the following table:

	£
GIGS staff costs	340,270
Other press officer costs	127,175
Other staff costs	368,585

Details of the costs of Special Advisers are given on an annual basis and information for the financial year 2003–04 will be published in due course.

Departmental Policies (Sustainable Development)

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of copying paper used by his Department in 2002–03 was from recycled sources; and how much post-consumer waste this paper contained. [165532]

Ruth Kelly: All copying paper used by HM Treasury during the period 2002–03 was 100 per cent. recycled and contained 100 per cent. post-consumer waste.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures he has put in place to ensure that his Department meets the quick win targets set by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to ensure that all copying paper bought by the Department is 100 per cent. recycled with a minimum of 75 per cent. post-consumer waste content. [165534]

Ruth Kelly: Currently all copying paper bought by HM Treasury is 100 per cent. recycled and contains 100 per cent. post-consumer waste.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list his Department's main suppliers of *(a)* copier paper, *(b)* stationery, *(c)* envelopes and *(d)* paper for reports; what the name of the paper used is in each case; and what the (i) recycled and (ii) post-consumer recycled content of each type of paper is in each case. [165537]

Ruth Kelly: All stationery, including copier paper, envelopes and paper for reports is bought from Banner. The paper is called "Evolve Office 80 g/m2". This paper is 100 per cent. recycled and contains 100 per cent. post-consumer waste.

Horse Passports

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether other EU countries charge VAT on horse passports. [165193]

John Healey: All member states are required to reflect the provisions of EU Directive's within their own national legislation. Therefore, horse passports issued by a public body under a statutory regime would be outside the scope of VAT. Other bodies supplying goods or services for payment normally fall within the scope of VAT.

Illegal Meat Imports

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much illegal meat has been seized by Customs and Excise in each of the last 10 years, broken down by species. [165198]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) on 3 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 59–60W.

The specific information requested is not available. Seizures identified according to type in DEFRA Annual Review are reproduced in the following table.

	1 April 2001 to 31 March 2003	*1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003*
Meat		
Number	1,242	2,986
Weight (kg)	18,955	31,301
Fish		
Number	353	1,837
Weight (kg)	32,691	21,267
Dairy		
Number	63	795
Weight (kg)	3,784	19,807
Multiple		
Number	361	2,172
Weight (kg)	55,791	36,170
Other		
Number	34	65
Weight (kg)	3,569	666

Inheritance Tax

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what amount of inheritance tax revenue was raised from estates of *(a)* less than £300,000, *(b)* £300,000 to £400,000, *(c)* £400,000 to £500,000, *(d)* £500,000 to £600,000, *(e)* £600,000 to £700,000, *(f)* £700,000 to £800,000, *(g)* £800,000 to £900,000, *(h)* £900,000 to £1 million and *(i)* over £1 million in the last year for which figures are available; and in each case what percentage the amount was of the total inheritance tax revenue raised. [163022]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 22 March 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the statistics published in Table 12.3 on the Inland Revenue's website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/inheritance_tax/03ir123F.pdf.

Iraq

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the Government's most recent estimate is of the cost of the British occupation of Iraq in each month since the start of the conflict. [164977]

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost to the UK of operations in Iraq in March 2004. [165591]

Mr. Boateng *[holding answer 31 March 2004]:* The Treasury does not estimate costs for Iraq in the manner requested.

The Chancellor set aside £3 billion in Budget 2003 to cover the cost of operations in Iraq, £1 billion was drawn down in the Spring Supplementary Estimate for 2002–03. The remaining £2 billion of this special reserve has been carried forward to 2003–04.

In the recent PBR the Chancellor announced a further £500 million set aside for the financial year 2003–04 and a further £300 million for 2004–05 as a prudent allowance to cover Iraq our continuing international commitment to the war on terrorism.

London

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest assessment is of the percentage of the UK Gross Domestic Product generated in London in each year since 1997–98. [151980]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Simon Hughes, dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your questions on the percentage of UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) generated in London since 1997. (151980)

The estimates in the attached tables are based on the regional Gross Value Added [1] (GVA) estimates for 2001 and earlier years published in August 2003. These are available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk = 7359

Table 1 Percentage of UK GVA[3] generated in London (Residence Based)[2]

	UK GVA (£ million)	*London GVA (£ million)*	*London GVA as a percentage of UK*
1997	705,851	111,117	16
1998	749,688	120,271	16
1999	781,847	127,124	16
2000	816,111	133,179	16
2001	851,408	140,354	16

Table 2 Percentage of UK GVA[3] generated in London (Workplace Based)[2]

	UK GVA (£ million)	*London GVA (£ million)*	*London GVA as a percentage of UK*
1997	705,851	126,567	18
1998	749,688	137,402	18
1999	781,847	145,413	19
2000	816,111	154,182	19
2001	851,408	162,501	19

1. Under the European System of Accounts 95 (ESA95) the economic estimates that are defined as Gross Value Added (GVA) at basic prices are broadly equivalent to what has been historically known as GDP at factor cost. ONS has effected the change frtim GDP at factor cost to GVA at basic prices as part of implementation of ESA95, along with all other EU countries. GVA at basic prices includes the effects of taxes less subsidies on production, but excludes taxes and subsidies on products, which are included in GDP at market prices under ESA95.

2. Estimates of GVA in Table A are on a residence basis, where the income of commuters is allocated to where they live, rather than their place of work. Estimates in Table B are on a workplace basis where the income of commuters is allocated to their place of work, rather than where they live.

3. GVA at current basic prices, excluding Extra-Regio. Extra Regio is that part of the UK's economic territory which cannot be allocated to any specific region. The contribution to UK GVA of UK embassies abroad and UK forces stationed overseas is included in Extra-Regio, along with the element of GVA relating to activities taking place on the continental shelf.

Lyons Report

Mr. Flook: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of Civil Service jobs currently located in the south-east that will be relocated to the south-west in line with the recommendations of the Lyons Report. [164563]

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what steps he is taking to implement the recommendations of the Lyons Report on aligning departmental pay with local market conditions; [164727]

(2) what mechanisms he has set up to co-ordinate *(a)* relocation and *(b)* redundancy of staff consequent on implementation of the Lyons Report; [164728]

(3) what assessment he has made of the capacity for other Government *(a)* Departments and *(b)* agencies to retain staff who are unable to relocate as a consequence of the recommendations in the Lyons Report; [164729]

(4) if he will make a statement on the process for determining whether the relocation options proposed in the Lyons Report will be implemented; [164741]

(5) what *(a)* redundancy and *(b)* early retirement arrangements there are for Civil Service staff who do not relocate as part of a relocation plan; [164748]

(6) what estimate he has made of the cost of the shortlife unit proposed in the Lyons Report to monitor progress on relocation. [164586]

Mr. Boateng: As set out in the 2004 Budget Report, the Government will come forward with detailed proposals for monitoring and implementing dispersal plans as part of the Spending Review.

Minimum Wage

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of young people who will directly benefit from the introduction of the minimum wage for 16 and 17-year-olds in *(a)* the constituency of Ogmore, *(b)* Bridgend county borough and *(c)* Wales. [164555]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Huw Irranca-Davies, dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the number of young people who will directly benefit from the introduction of the minimum wage for 16 to 17-year-olds in *(a)* the constituency of Ogmore, *(b)* Bridgend county borough and *(c)* Wales. (164555)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) calculates estimates of the total number of jobs paid less than National Minimum Wage rates for the United Kingdom and Government Office Regions (including Wales). A guide to measuring low pay and associated articles and data can be found on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk = 5837&Pos = l&ColRank = l&Rank = 272.

Estimates for Parliamentary Constituencies and counties are not available for any age group and for 16 to 17-year-olds, estimates are also not available at Government Office Region level.

Manufacturing (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many jobs there were in the manufacturing sector in Wales in each year since 1997; and what manufacturing sector output was as a proportion of GDP in Wales in each year since 1997. [151759]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Bill Wiggin, dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about manufacturing jobs and output in Wales. (151759)

The Annual Business Inquiry provides information on jobs in Wales by industry. Table 1 shows the number of employees in manufacturing businesses in Wales from December 1997 to December 2002.

Table 2 shows the proportion of manufacturing Gross Value Added (GVA) to total GVA for Wales. The estimates are based on the regional GVA estimates published in August 2003. These are available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=7359

Under the European System of Accounts 95 (ES A95) the economic estimates that are defined as Gross Value Added (GVA) at basic prices are broadly equivalent to what has been historically known as GDP at factor cost. The Office for National Statistic has effected the change from GDP at factor cost to GVA at basic prices as part of implementation of ESA95, along with all other EU countries. GVA at basic prices includes the effects of taxes less subsidies on production, but excludes taxes and subsidies on products, which are included in GDP at market prices under ESA95.

Table 1: Manufacturing employee jobs in Wales, 1997–2002

Year	*Number of employee jobs (thousand)*
1997	215
1998	208
1999	207
2000	201
2001	189
2002	185

Source:
Annual Business Inquiry, Annual Employment Survey

Table 2: Manufacturing Gross Value Added[1] as a proportion of total GVA of Wales

Year	*Manufacturing GVA of Wales (£ million)*	*Total GVA of Wales (£ million)*	*Manufacturing as a proportion of total GVA of Wales (%)*
1997	8,007	28,942	28
1998	7,941	29,718	27
1999	7,775	30,652	25
2000	7,826	31,864	25

[1] GVA at current basic prices, excluding Extra-Regio. Extra Regio is that part of the UK's economic territory which cannot be allocated to any specific region. The contribution to UK GVA of UK embassies abroad and UK forces stationed overseas is included in Extra-Regio, along with the element of GVA relating to activities taking place on the continental shelf.

Miners' Pensions

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he, or one of his ministers, will meet ex-miners from the Lichfield constituency in London to discuss the funding of the two miners' pension schemes and contributions made to the Exchequer. [163461]

Nigel Griffiths: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1681–82W.

Office for National Statistics

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has made of the recruitment and retention of staff at Titchfield if the office is *(a)* not relocated and *(b)* relocated on the completion of the ONS modernisation programme; [164721]

(2) what assessment he has made of the number of people at the Office for National Statistics office in Titchfield who will be prepared to move to *(a)* Bristol and *(b)* Wales. [164755]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Hoban dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent questions concerning what assessment the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has made of the recruitment and retention of staff at Titchfield and of the number of staff who would be prepared to relocate.

An initial assessment of these issues was discussed with the Lyons review team. A fuller assessment will be considered as part of the Spending Review.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will publish the submission made to Sir Michael Lyons by the Office for National Statistics; [164722]

(2) what representations the Office for National Statistics made to Sir Michael Lyons during the preparation of his report. [164736]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Hoban dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent questions concerning what representations the Office for National Statistics(ONS) made to Sir Michael Lyons during the preparation of his report and also if the ONS will publish the submission made to Sir Michael.

ONS officials corresponded with and met members of Sir Michael Lyons' team on a number of occasions during the conduct of his review and preparation of his report.

The submission was not a public document although ONS staff have been informed of its contents. Some information was provided to the Lyons Report on a confidential basis and will not be published.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment his Department made of the upfront relocation costs per person of staff employed at the Office for National Statistics in Titchfield; [164723]

(2) what assessment he has made of the service delivery improvements that would accrue from the relocation of the Office for National Statistics office from Titchfield; [164745]

(3) what assessment he has made of the cost of relocating the Office for National Statistics office from Titchfield to another location; and what cost savings are expected to arise from the relocation.; [164751]

(4) what assessment he has made of the *(a)* financial and *(b)* operational benefits that would accrue to the Office for National Statistics from the proposed move of its office from Titchfield. [164756]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Hoban, dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent questions concerning the financial and operational implications of the proposed move of the Office for National Statistics from its office in Titchfield. (164756, 164751, 164723, 164745)

An initial assessment of these issues was discussed with the Lyons Review team. A fuller assessment will be considered as part of the Spending Review, including detailed proposals for the costs of relocating staff.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans the Office for National Statistics has to develop regional pay rates. [164725]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Peter Walton to Mr. Mark Hoban dated 1 April 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on what plans the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has to develop regional pay rates. I am replying in his absence.

ONS already distinguishes between London and National rates of pay. National pay scales apply to staff based at all sites other than London.

Any further plans to develop regional pay rates would have to be taken forward in the context of HM Treasury guidance.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what discussions he has had with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister concerning the use of the Office for National Statistics office at Titchfield; [164733]

(2) what assessment he has made of the future use of the Office for National Statistics site at Titchfield in the event of relocation. [164752]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Hoban, dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent questions concerning future use of the Office for National Statistics site at Titchfield and what discussions have taken place with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. (164733, 164752)

A key element of the Lyons Review recommendations is the need for a coordinated approach across Government. Discussion of the future use of the ONS site at Titchfield will depend on the outcome of the 2004 Spending Review. However, there have been no such discussions at this stage.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the links between the Office for National Statistics office at Titchfield and Southampton University will be maintained if the office is relocated. [164737]

Ruth Kelly: The information falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Hoban, dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking whether the links between the Office for National Statistics office at Titchfield and Southampton University will be maintained if the office is relocated. (164737)

We have no plans to cease links with Southampton University.

The relationship between ONS and Southampton University is an important intangible benefit of location at Titchfield, and it has strengthened work on the 2001 Census in particular. If the work currently undertaken at the Titchfield site were to be relocated, we would work hard to preserve these links.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when Office for National Statistics *(a)* management and *(b)* staff were informed of the proposals set out in the Lyons Report. [164739]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Hoban, dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking when Office for National Statistics (ONS) *(a)* management and *(b)* staff were informed of the proposals set out in the Lyons Report. (164739)

Copies of the Lyons Report were sent to the heads of all Government departments (including ONS) late on the afternoon of Friday 12 March 2004. ONS staff were then informed of the proposals on the afternoon of Monday 15 March 2004.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will announce a final decision on the relocation of the Office for National Statistics from Titchfield. [164740]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Hoban, dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking when a final decision on the relocation of the Office for National Statistics from Titchfield will be announced. (164740)

I expect a final decision to be announced following the conclusion of the 2004 Spending Review.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many (1) *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time employees are based at the Office for National Statistics in Titchfield; [164750]

(2) if he will list the *(a)* grade and *(b)* function of staff employed at the Office for National Statistics office in Titchfield; [164746]

(3) what supplements are payable to Office for National Statistics staff working in *(a)* London, *(b)* Southport, *(c)* Wales, *(d)* Bristol and *(e)* Hampshire; [164744]

(4) what the average salary is of the Office for National Statistics staff at *(a)* Titchfield and *(b)* Newport. [164743]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Hoban dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions on staffing and remuneration issues relating to the Titchfield site of the Office for National Statistics (ONS). (164743, 164744, 164746, 164750)

The average salaries of staff working at the Newport and Titchfield sites of ONS at March 2004 are as follows:

Newport £18,821

Titchfield £21,052

These earnings figures are for full time equivalent salaries for ONS civil servants and reflect the different mix of grades at each location.

ONS do not make regional pay supplements. We only distinguish between London and National pay. National pay scales apply to staff based at all sites other than London.

As of March 2004, there are 821 ONS civil servants based at the Titchfield site, of whom 672 are full-time and 149 are part time. There are additional crown employees working at Titchfield on a part-time basis as telephone interviewers. There are an average of 325 such staff employed, although the exact number varies between 300 and 350 on a monthly basis.

The grades and functions of civil servants employed at the ONS Titchfield site are shown in the attached table.

Number, grade and functions of ONS civil service staff based at the Titchfield site, March 2004

Grade	*No of staff (Headcount)*	*Functions*
Al	31	Basic administrative duties, Reprographic operators, Data entry and stores.
A2	224	Administration staff.
A3	17	Library, Personal Assistants.
Bl and B2	193	First line managers, IT programmers.
AS	4	Assistant Statisticians.
Cl and C2	189	Business Managers, Middle managers, Technical team leaders (IT), Research officers, Methodologists, Geographers.
C3	50	Project managers, Business Analysts, Business managers,
C4	37	Senior Researchers, Senior Methodologists, Senior Geographers, Senior Business Analysts, Project Managers.
D2and D3	65	Branch Head Statisticians, Principal Research Officers, Principal Methodologists
D4	7	Senior Managers
SCS grade 1	4	Senior civil servants (SCS)
Total	821	

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of the relocation of the Office for National Statistics office in Titchfield on the economy of South East Hampshire. [164754]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Hoban, dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what assessment has been made of the impact of the relocation of the Office for National Statistics office in Titchfield, on the economy of South East Hampshire. (164754)

The impact of the proposed relocation will be a factor taken into account in the 2004 Spending Review.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the operating costs of the Office for National Statistics premises in Titchfield are. [164757]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Hoban, dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the operating costs of the Office for National Statistics premises in Titchfield are.(164757)

The forecast expenditure on estates, property and facilities management required to keep the Titchfield site operational in 2003–04 is £2.76 million.

Pet Passports

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether VAT is chargeable in relation to pet passports *(a)* by his Department for providing the certificate and *(b)* by the veterinary surgeon who vaccinates the animal. [163771]

John Healey *[holding answer 26 March 2004]:* I have been asked to reply.

DEFRA provides animal health certificates under the Pet Travel Scheme to Government-authorised veterinarians for completion and subsequent issue. Since DEFRA does not charge veterinarians for the supply of certificates, this is outside the scope of VAT.

Veterinary surgeons issue certificates as part of their professional services. Their charges for these services are subject to VAT at the standard rate of 17.5 per cent.

Pre-owned Assets

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the number of households likely to be affected by the Inland Revenue's proposed tax on pre-owned assets; [159014]

(2) what research his Department has commissioned on the effect of the proposed tax on pre-owned assets on elderly individuals who have gifted their house to their relatives. [159015]

Dawn Primarolo: Following consultation, proposals to tackle tax avoidance using trusts were set out in the Budget 2004 (paragraphs 5.87 to 5.90).

Premium Bonds

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the odds were of winning a prize in the Premium Bond draw with a holding of £1,000 in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 1997 and *(c)* 1993; and if he will make a statement. [165098]

Ruth Kelly: The Premium Bond odds, with a holding balance of £1,000, were as follows;

December 2003—one in 30.50

December 1997—one in 19.50

December 1993—one in 15.51

Public Services

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on levels of investment in public services. [163965]

Mr. Boateng: Tables C4 and C5 of Budget 2004 set out the Government's aggregate plans for public sector capital investment. Under these plans, Public Sector Net Investment will reach 2.2 per cent. of GDP by 2007–08 to rectify the historical under-investment in public infrastructure and deliver improved public services. More information on specific capital allocations through to 2005–06 is set out in the SR2002 White Paper (Cm 5570) and the Government will set out new capital plans for 2006/-07 and 2007–08 in the forthcoming Spending Review.

Register of Interests

Bob Spink: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the requirements are on officials in his Department to declare current interests; and what register of interests is kept for his departmental officials. [164710]

Ruth Kelly: The Civil Service Management Code sets out the requirement for civil servants declaring any conflict of interest.

HM Treasury staff must declare to their team leader or senior management any business interests they would be able to further as a result of their official position.

Self-Assessment (Late Submission)

Bob Russell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many penalty notices were issued by the Inland Revenue for the late submission or non-submission by taxpayers of their 2003 self-assessment tax returns. [162325]

Dawn Primarolo: As stated in Budget 2004 (HC 301), and in line with previous years, 90.6 per cent. of self assessment returns were filled on time. Over one million returns were received electronically. Inland Revenue issued 952,766 Late Filing Penalty Notices on 17 February 2004 for returns not submitted by the due date.

Spirits Tax

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* lower and *(b)* upper limits are of his estimate of the annual amount of spirits duty fraud; and how he arrived at these estimates. [165232]

John Healey: Customs' estimate of spirits revenue evaded in 2001–02 is £600 million,as reported in "Measuring and Tackling indirect Fraud Losses 2003" (December 2003). The National Audit Office report "Estimating the Level of Spirits Fraud" (March 2004) calculates a corresponding 95 per cent. confidence interval of between £330 million and £1,080 million. This calculation takes account both of sampling variation in the initial level of consumption and of the under-reporting variation. Both reports are available in the Library of the House.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his policy that the obligation to stamp spirit bottles announced in the Budget should extend to spirits produced in Northern Ireland. [164572]

John Healey *[holding answer 31 March 2004]:* The requirement for qualifying UK retail containers to bear a tax stamp will apply to all home-produced and imported products.

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the change in *(a)* sales of spirits in the UK and *(b)* the consequent amount of duty collected that would be caused by increases in the sale price of a 70cl bottle in steps of one penny, up to 40 pence. [164498]

John Healey *[holding answer 30 March 2004]:* The sale price of a bottle of spirits is a commercial decision for individual retailers. HM Customs and Excise estimates that a 10p increase in the sale price of a bottle of spirits would lead to a reduction in sales of UK-dutied spirits of around 0.8 per cent. The effects of smaller or larger increases would be broadly pro rata. The impact on spirits duty revenues would depend on the extent to which such an increase was related to spirits duty increases or other factors.

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment he has made of the cost to the spirits industry of complying with his proposed tax stamps scheme; and which compliance costs he has so far not assessed; [164569]

(2) what assessment he has made of the cost to the spirits industry of keeping tax stamps secure. [164570]

John Healey *[holding answer 30 March 2004]:* The Government announced in the Budget that, owing to continued high levels of spirits duty fraud, it will legislate to implement the Roques Report recommendation to introduce tax stamps for spirits. In doing so, the Government will help the trade financially with compliance costs by deferring payment for tax stamps, assisting firms with capital investment and freezing spirits duty for the remainder of this Parliament. The Government are also investigating the potential for offsetting security costs. Further announcements will be made once all the detailed offsetting options have been considered in discussion with the trade.

A Regulatory Impact Assessment, to be published alongside the Finance Bill on 8 April, will identify in detail the impacts, costs and benefits of the tax stamp regime.

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has held with the First Minister of Scotland with regard to the introduction of tax stamps on bottles of spirits. [164565]

John Healey: I refer the hon. gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Perth, Annabelle Ewing the hon. Member for Perth earlier today.

T Element

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) which *(a)* universities and *(b)* other institutions are required to adhere to the Customs and Excise T element; [163962]

(2) what plans he has to extend the T element to *(a)* all universities and *(b)* other institutions; and if he will list the institutions which (i) have not yet adhered and (ii) have adhered but not made payment; [163963]

(3) if he will compensate those universities which have paid the T element and are financially disadvantaged in relation to universities which should have paid but have not. [163964]

John Healey: Organisations can only recover VAT they incur on purchases that relate to their taxable business activities. The provision of education for a fee is exempt from VAT, so universities and other educational institutions cannot recover the VAT which relates to their exempt supplies of education.

Bodies which engage in both taxable and exempt activities must use a partial exemption method to work out the amount of VAT they can recover. The partial exemption method a university uses is designed to take account of its individual circumstances, but HM Customs and Excise cannot accept a partial exemption special method that does not produce a fair and reasonable recovery of VAT.

Universities and other higher education institutions often use methods that calculate their recoverable VAT in proportion to the value of their supplies of education. In these cases, Customs will take account of the value of the Higher education Funding Council teaching grant (the "T element") when agreeing the method.

The Government cannot comment on the VAT affairs of individual taxpayers. Exemption 15*(a)* of the Open Government Code applies.

Tax

Mr. McFall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is regarded by his Department as *(a)* legitimate and *(b)* illegitimate avoidance of tax. [161858]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government take steps to close down tax avoidance schemes as they become aware of them, particularly where they create economic distortions, provide commercial advantages over compliant taxpayers, redistribute tax revenues in an unfair and arbitrary manner, or represent an abuse that conflicts with or defeats the will of Parliament.

Mr. McFall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action his Department has taken to establish best practice in international approaches to tackling tax avoidance. [161859]

Dawn Primarolo: The UK has a long, and well-established, history of working with other countries, both bilaterally and multilaterally, on a range of tax issues. We are leading participants in a number of international tax fora and continue to share experience and best practice in international approaches to tackling tax avoidance.

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much tax that should have been paid is outstanding from each of the last five financial years. [R] [149812]

Dawn Primarolo: Reliable information is not available in the form requested. I refer the hon. Member to the NAO report, "The Recovery of Debt by the Inland Revenue", published on 24 March 2004.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the Answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 122W, on tax credits, what proportion of the expected £300 million per annum overhead costs of administering the child and working tax credits will be paid to private contractors. [163691]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue paid £107 million (excluding VAT and payments in respect of capital purchases) to private contractors during the financial year 2002–03 for the delivery of the tax credits programme. The equivalent figure for the financial year 2003–04 is not yet available.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much tax he estimates has been uncollected in the past five years. [162467]

Dawn Primaroio: In respect of the Inland Revenue, I refer the hon. Member to the NAO report "The Recovery of Debt by the Inland Revenue", which reflects the position in March 2003. Comparable data for earlier years are not available.

Customs' latest estimates of tax losses were published in "Measuring and Tackling Indirect Tax Losses" in December 2003, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

Unemployment (Crosby)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the rate of unemployment in each *(a)* region and *(b)* nation of the United Kingdom was in each month since 1995; and if he will make a statement. [151829]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 1 April 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on unemployment rates. (151829)

The information requested is available from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) on a monthly basis for rolling three-month periods starting with December 1996 to February 1997 and ending with September to November 2003. As with any sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to sampling variability.

It is not practicable to print a table of this size in the *Official Report*. However, these data are published on the Office for National Statistics website as part of Table 18 of the Labour Market Statistics First Release Historical Supplement. This may be accessed via the House of Commons Library; the web page address is: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/LMS_FR_HS/Table18sa.xls.

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- The index to the daily parts of Hansard. This covers the same date range as the volume index but references may be different as a result of changes to the text and column numbering.
- The sessional index to Hansard. This contains references to material in the bound volumes for a whole session.

Indexes on the Parliamentary website

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SCOPE

The indexes include entries covering:

- The content of all material recorded in Hansard, including debates, procedural motions and questions.
- The names of all Members contributing to the Parliamentary business recorded in Hansard.
- The names of some types of Parliamentary business whenever they occur in Hansard. These are 'Ministerial statements', 'Business statements', 'Opposition days' and 'Estimates days'.

ARRANGEMENT

- All headings are in one word-by-word alphabetical sequence, with Members' contribution entries distinguished from other entries by italics.
- Where a Member contributes to Parliamentary business and is the subject of Parliamentary business there are separate contribution and subject entries, the subject entry coming first.
- Entries beginning 'Mac' and 'Mc' are sorted in one sequence as 'Mac'.
- 'St', when abbreviated for Saint, is filed as 'Saint'.
- Numbers are filed as if spelt out, e.g. '10 Downing Street' as if 'Ten Downing Street'.

HEADINGS

Choice of headings

- *Specificity*—Entries summarise the overall content of a debate or question as specifically as the various POLIS thesauruses allow. For example, Education, Higher education, Universities or the name of a particular university is used depending on the breadth of the item.
- *Name headings*—Specific entries are included for the names of people, places, institutions, organisations, committees, programmes, initiatives, publications and legislation when these constitute the overall subject of an item.
- *Organisations and subjects*—Organisation entries are preferred for material about the general performance, administration and staffing of an organisation (for example, United Kingdom Passports Agency, Standards). Subject entries are preferred for what organisations do as part of their duties (for example, Passports, Fees and charges).

Geographical coverage

- *Subject headings*—Subject headings are assumed to refer to the whole of England, Great Britain or the United Kingdom unless otherwise stated.
- *Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales*—Material relating to the whole of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales is indexed under these headings.
- *Places within the UK*—Material about specific towns, areas and institutions is entered under the name of the specific town, area or institution.
- *Foreign countries*—Most material relating to foreign countries is collected under the name of that country. Some additional material may be found under the names of—groups of countries, areas within countries, geographical features, place names associated with particular issues, politicians and heads of state, international bodies, and institutions and companies operating in those countries.
- *EC/EU material*—General material about the European Communities and European institutions as bodies is entered under 'European Communities' and 'EC institutions'. Organisational material about specific communities and institutions is entered under the name of the body, for example 'European Coal and Steel Community' or 'European Parliament'. Material about what the Communities and institutions are doing or propose to do is entered under various subject headings beginning 'EC' such as 'EC environmental policy'.

Parliamentary material and business

- *Material about Parliament*—This is indexed under 'Parliament', the names of the two Houses, the 'Palace of Westminster' and parts of the Parliamentary estate (such as 'Portcullis House').
- *Committees*—Material about committees is indexed under 'Committees', types of committee (such as 'Select committees') and the names of individual committees (such as 'Home Affairs Select Committee').
- *Parliamentary proceedings/procedures*—Material discussing these is indexed under the specific type of proceeding (such as 'Parliamentary questions' or 'Oral questions'), procedure (such as 'Calling of Members') or issue (such as 'Unparliamentary expressions').
- *Legislation*—Entries for Parliamentary proceedings on bills and statutory instruments are entered under their titles. Where the lead word of the bill or statutory instrument does not provide a full or clear indication of the subject there are additional subject entries when the bill or instrument is debated. For example, debates on the 'Child Support Pensions and Social Security Bill' have entries under 'Pensions' and 'Social security benefits' as well as under the title of the Bill.
- *Members' names*—These are given in the form by which the Member prefers to be known.
- *Speaker and Chair*—Contributions by the Speaker and deputies are brought together under the heading 'Speaker and deputies'. Contributions from the chair during Committees of the Whole House are brought together under 'Chairman of Committee of the Whole House'. Significant rulings and statements (as opposed to routine comments) are indicated by the sub-heading 'Rulings and statements' in both cases.

Guidance on headings

- *Cross references*—'See' references indicate all the material has been entered under another heading. 'See also' references indicate that additional information may be found under another heading.
- *Concept thesaurus*—A copy of the subject thesaurus to POLIS, listing the concept entries used in the index, is available on the Parliamentary website. A hard copy is available from the Head of the POLIS Unit, House of Commons Library, 1 Derby Gate, London, SW1A 2DG (020 7219 6456).

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- References in the indexes are to columns rather than pages.
- References to debates, but not questions, are accompanied by the date of the item.
- There are separate sequences in Hansard for the material taken on the floor of the House, Westminster Hall sittings, written statements and written questions:
  - References consisting of a number by itself indicate material taken on the floor of the House.
  - References ending in 'wh' indicate Westminster Hall sittings.
  - References ending in 'ws' indicate written statements.
  - References ending in 'w' indicate written questions.
- References under all headings except the names of Members contributing to Parliamentary business and the titles of legislation are listed in one numerical sequence irrespective of whether the material is taken on the floor of the House, is discussed at a Westminster Hall sitting, is a written statement or is a written question.
- References under the names of Members contributing to Parliamentary business and the titles of legislation are listed in numerical sequence under the following headings:
  - *Chamber Debates* (which includes interventions and points of order as well as significant contributions to debates);
  - *Westminster Hall Debates* (covering all debates held as part of the Westminster Hall sittings);
  - *Written Statements* (consisting of ministerial statements issued in writing); and
  - *Questions* (which includes all written, oral and urgent questions).

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in connection with the progress of bills:

- 1R = First reading
- 2R = Second reading
- Com = Committee stage
- Rep = Report stage
- 3R = Third reading
- res = resolution
- amendt(s) = amendment(s)
- * = matter taken formally without debate or division
- (HL) = Bill starting in House of Lords
- (SP) = Bill in Scottish Parliament.

Parliamentary background

- The Parliamentary website at http://www.parliament.uk contains a range of information about Parliament and the full text of some Parliamentary papers and proceedings including Hansard.
- Information on current Parliamentary business is provided in the House of Commons Information Office *Weekly Information Bulletin*, available on the website and from The Stationery Office (020 7873 8499).
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